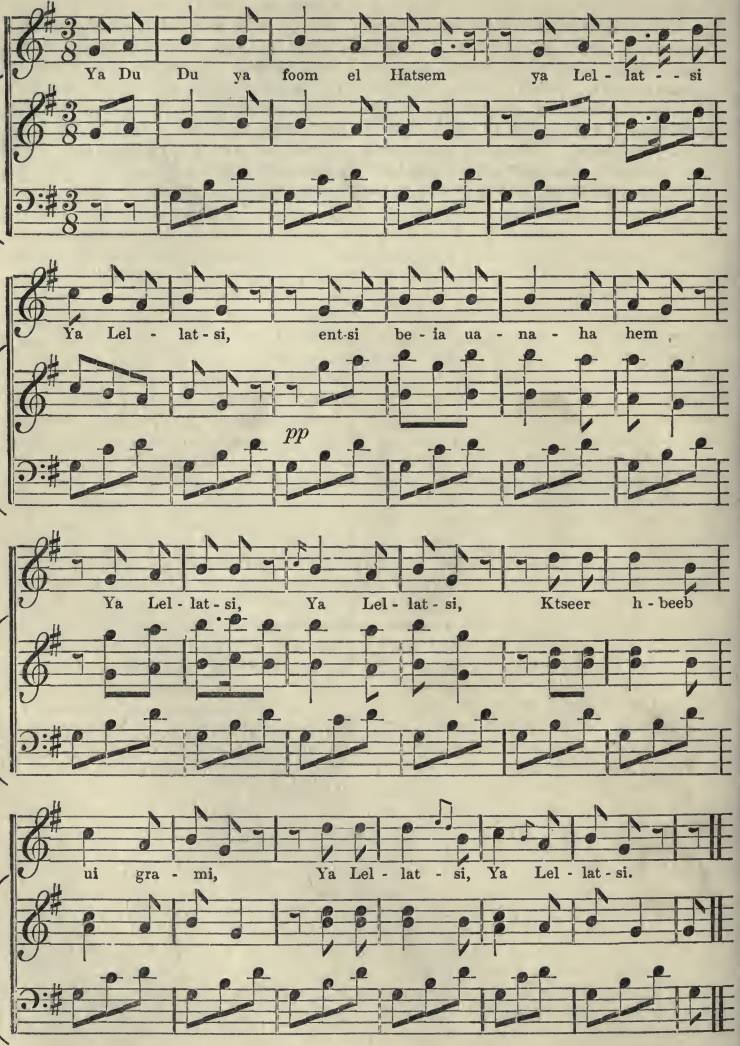UC-NRLF
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Referred to at page 29.



TRANSLATION.

O Dedu! Your mouth is like a ring. O my lady! O my lady!
You are courted by all, but I am your lord. O my lady! O my lady!
Much love for you, my sweetheart.

London: Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES and SONS, Stamford Street.

LETTERS

FROM THE

SHORES OF THE BALTIC.

by Eliz. Rigby Eastlake.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1844.

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LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES and SONS,
Stamford Street.

TO HER WHOSE PRESENCE ENHANCED EVERY PLEASURE; WHOSE AFFECTION SHARED EVERY TRIAL; AND WHOSE REMEMBRANCE HAS RENDERED THE REVISAL OF THESE LETTERS A TASK OF MOURNFUL SWEETNESS, THE FOLLOWING VOLUME IS DEDICATED.



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LETTERS FROM THE BALTIC.

LETTER THE FIRST.

Various motives of Travel—Dramatis Personæ on board a large steamer—A severe storm—Death of a horse—Anchorage at Christiansand in Norway—The Paris steamer—Hamlet's Castle—Elsineur—Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton—Arrival at Copenhagen.

Of all the pleasures and luxuries which the blessings of modern peace have brought in their train, none are more universally desired, pursued, attained, and abused than those of travelling. Of all the varying motives which impel the actions of mankind, at this or any time, none are so multifarious, so relative, so contradictory, and so specious as those of travelling. The young and ardent, borne on the wings of hope; the listless and vapid, pushed forward on the mere dancing wire of fashion; the restless and disappointed, urged onward by the perpetual spur of excitement,—all bring a different worship to the same idol. If there be good angels watching our movements from above, gazing, as the deaf, on the busy dance of life, and insensible to the jarring tones which impel it, how utterly incomprehensible must those inducements appear to them which drive tens of thousands annually from their native shores, to seek enjoyments which at home they would not have extended a hand to grasp, to encounter discomforts which at home would have been shunned as positive misfortunes, to withhold their substance where it ill can be spared, to spend it where it were better away, which lead individuals voluntarily to forsake all they can best love and trust, to follow a phantom, to double the chances of misfortune, or at best but to create to themselves a new home to leave it again, in sorrow and heaviness of heart, like the old one! But such is human nature, seldom enjoying a good but in anticipation, seldom prizing happiness till it is gone; and such the reflections, inconsistent if true, of one who, self-condemned, is following in the motley herd of these emigrants, and who has now outwardly quitted all of England, save a narrow blue strip on the horizon which a finger may cover.

And now even that has disappeared; and I may turn with undivided attention to this little cluster of mankind, to this tiny epitome of the great world, who scarcely before had one interest in common, and are now all bound to the same bourn, without, perhaps, two motives in unison. What parts they intend to play on our tossing boards by no means yet appear. Some are on the sick list already, others on the verge of enrolment; some inviting, but not accessible; others too forbidding in their sullen walk overhead, in the deep retirement of their macintoshes, to make it a matter of interest whether they be the one or the other. Families still cling together, for the further bound, the firmer does the English nationality adhere, and all maintain a quiet reserve, except a few huge-ringed Germans, in whose favour one would scarcely care first to waive it, and a Frenchman, an old officer of the Empire, who is unobtrusively attentive to all. It argues no want of Christian charity to judge

at first sight what is displayed at first sight. That portion of character which each individual first brings to market is his taste, it matters not whether in dress, manners, or conversation; and any uncalled-for exhibition of the deeper and more sacred parts of a character at this stage of acquaintance is as much at variance with the rules of taste as the grossest neglect of conventional courtesy would be on the other hand.

Our most conspicuous group is an English gentleman, with his wife and family. Himself, with a high-priestral air and aristocratic bearing, and a melodious voice, and a frame of strength that might better have been bestowed on one of our sailors; his wife, a pretty delicate woman, who tripped at first with a light foot by his side, but is now laid low in her berth, with her little boy of six years old tumbling about her. The daughter, a lovely girl of seventeen, still remains proof to the increasing movement, and braves a cold wind without cloak or boa, showing a white throat round which her light ringlets, escaping from a cloth travelling cap, more becoming than serviceable to the pretty countenance beneath, wind themselves in lengthening circles. Then follows a Swedish lady, with two daughters, or nieces, whose timid bearing contrasts most strangely with her own. In truth, she promises to prove but a troublesome addition to the party, and it would be difficult to define to what school of propriety her manners belong, or how she contrived to make them pass current in the land we have just quitted. She may be a worthy woman, but wants the good taste to seem so: may Neptune not spare her! To her succeed various sundries, single ladies and single gentlemen, and a newly-married couple, who came on board most vehemently enamoured, but now sit with averted faces and crest-fallen looks, and seem to find Cupid anything but a good sailor. And, lastly, our good captain, whom, before starting, we found in no very amicable discussion with two stout gentlemen, and who retained his ruffled looks for the first few hours of our voyage, but now shines forth a man of kindnesses and courtesies, appearing with a merry anecdote, or some tempting cordial for those who can still be tempted, and shaking his head with a serio-comic expression as he finds his saloon emptying and his berths filling, though he does not seem much distressed about it either. Our chances of a pleasant voyage seem but slender; the wind is dead-a-head, and whispers are passing round that the vessel is unduly laden. Upon the fore-decks are fixed six pyramidal masses of lead, which completely submerge that end, lifting our aft-end out of the waves, and increasing the movement in a proportionate degree. The second cabin and every other spare space is broken up and filled with cargo, which quarters a few very shabby passengers upon our saloon: while a beautiful horse, bound for the Prince of Oldenburg, but with small chance of reaching him, being denied the necessary accommodations for a voyage of this length, was placed in an open crib upon deck, where the first few rough seas threw him down, and where he now lies, drenched with salt water, in a state of suffering which wrings all hearts to behold. The merchant part of the vessel is the business of the directors to whom she belongs. In our present prospects, therefore, the two fat worshippers of Mammon, who disturbed our worthy captain's peace of mind at the onset, are thought of with no good will.

Three days have now elapsed since I took up the pen, and three such days as will scarcely be forgotten by any one on board. Were it not for my oath of fidelity, I might be tempted to pass over the scenes of the interim rather than wring one sigh, though it were of thankfulness, from hearts I love. The rolling and labouring of the vessel increased with every hour; the fore-end settled more completely under the waves, whilst ours swung to and fro, describing almost a half circle at every swell. As for the sufferings below, though of little moment when compared with the labours and exertions on deck, yet they were such as I question whether any overhead would have ex-

changed with—and yet the miserable beings in the berths were almost envied by those whose proud stomachs, and but few there were, still allowed them the use of their feet,—if such it could be called, when the latter were taken from under you at every instant. Chairs tipped over—sofas glided away—our meals were snatched between high entrenchments, while at any more desperate toss every arm was extended to embrace the decanter, or any other fragile neighbour who seemed in danger of falling. At first, all this was borne with infinite good humour, and there was plenty of the ludicrous to supply the absence of the comfortable; but soon this vanished amidst the tumult of the elements, jokes came few and far between from lips which carefully suppressed other feelings, and the tacit freemasonry of anxiety was all that remained to the slender remnant in the saloon. Three exhausting days had thus been passed, each rougher than its predecessor, and the evening of the third now wore on frightfully. The promptitude of all hands—the fearful shocks—and the upturned position of the vessel, banished even the small comfort which our ignorance of sea matters had afforded. A few of us, unable to quit the comfort of companionship, lingered up by the light of a small lamp sunk deep in a basin. The steward and stewardess each stood at the door of their respective departments. The pretty young English girl, who had meanwhile much associated herself with me, and hitherto proved a stout sailor, now, giving way to a sense of danger her short life had never before experienced, flung herself on my neck and wept in agony. I tried to comfort her, but words of comfort came strangely from one who knew none within, and were contradicted too instantly by the wild hubbub around. I felt like a false prophet, saying "Peace, peace," where there was no peace. There are not many who have leisure to note the various sounds of a desperate vessel—the horrid crack and strain which accompanies each descent into the abyss, and which the ear drinks greedily in till it knows them by heart, or till a new wrench, louder than the foregoing, startles and probes you to a fresh sense of fear. Or, worse than all, the swimming, deathlike suspense of sound and movement, when she lies powerless in the curdling deep, and the moan of the gale, and the toll of the watch-bell, sounding like your knell, is heard above. At this moment a tremendous sea lifted us from the ocean, and then hurried us crashing down to a depth whence it seemed impossible for any inanimate object to recover itself. All the furniture fell around; and, in the convulsive grasp with which I clung to my companion, I felt another arm was round her neck—it was her mother—pale and agitated—her little boy on her other hand. The stewardess was on her knees, and the steward, with the sang-froid of long sea experience, coolly said, "Such another sea will finish us." All now rushed from their berths, sickness was forgotten in the general panic, and the captain's clear voice was heard calling down the companion, "Let the passengers prepare to come on deck at a moment's warning, but not *before*." Not a word now was spoken, and with hearts less appalled with the actual presence of danger, than wrung with the recollection of home and friends, each prepared himself or assisted others. And thus we waited—some trembling, others cold and firm as marble, none in foolish lamentations; our hearts sick with the excessive tension which weighted the overladen minutes; every instant expecting the dread summons on deck—every instant thankful that its predecessor had left us in safety. Four mortal hours, from midnight till four in the morning, the struggle lasted, when the captain appeared amongst us and bade us retire to rest; no question was asked him, but his bleached face and worn looks showed the wear of mind and body he had undergone. Thus our trial ended. Thanks be to God, and our good ship.

The next morning a late breakfast gathered together a few silent, languid customers; for the complete exhaustion, the dreadful stretch to which every feeling of our minds and nerve

of our bodies had been subjected, now made itself felt. Nor was the rolling of the vessel at this hour any joke. We ate with our fingers, for knives and forks would have been too dangerous implements; plates were superfluous where not one thing kept its place for one moment. The impossibility of inducing the tea-pot and teacups to act in the necessary concert excited a few faint smiles; when down went the coffee-pot, and the milk after it, which loosened our muscles more effectually. I was glad of this opportunity to witness a really fine sea, and, being securely lashed on deck, gazed on a liquid wall of the most exquisite marine colours, battlemented with crests of angry foam which bound in our horizon to a narrow span. Towards the fore-end all was devastation —the water had torn away all it could reach; but there stood those ill-fated masses of lead, like harpies of evil omen upon us, unmoved by the dreadful rocking of the storm. They had been cursed enough in that night by the ship's company, whose united strength had not sufficed to stir them one inch from their place; and with them, the directors, whose cupidity had planted them there. And this reminds me of a confession which my young friend has made me, and which is too pretty to be withheld. Many a prayer during the hours of suspense had burst from her youthful heart, and, in her anxiety to render them most acceptable to the throne of grace, she bethought herself that a Christian ought to pray for her enemies. But now came a difficult question!—who were the enemies of happy seventeen? who had ever frowned on that happy face? At length it occurred to her that those who had brought her into this strait were her only legitimate foes, and I grudge the greedy directors the ingenuous prayer which went up for them on that night of terror. The chief danger had arisen from the possibility of both engine fires extinguishing at once. The tremendous sea which dashed over us at midnight had quenched one, and had the other shared its fate, the vessel, from the contrary gale, the furious sea, and its own fettered and logged condition, must have become unmanageable.

But while I am talking of dangers past, who has thought on the poor horse? Alas! the noble creature lay on its side—its eyes closed, every joint shattered, only *not* dead. The captain was besieged with entreaties to have it released from its pain; but here cruel policy interfered, and for a horse of this value, though its end be certain, he dared not be responsible. It died the next day.

We now changed our course, and steered for Christiansand in Norway. In a few hours all was quiet, the sky became serene, the liquid mountains sank, and a bold, rocky coast, softening in the rays of the evening sun, appeared in sight. We reached the little haven, through magnificent defiles of rock, about six in the evening, and this quiet anchorage after the late severe struggle seemed like lassitude after pain. Here, we put the whole little Christiansand world into a commotion. The decks were crowded with loitering, staring individuals, while we made ready to go on shore and explore ere it should become too dark. Now that all was safe, the Swedish lady thought fit to act a scene and play the timid. On shore she would go, but screamed on descending the ship's side, and laying herself literally along the ladder, refused to move up or down; while half a dozen boats below contended for her favours, and one of our rough tars called out from above, "Take a boat-hook to her." The captain, however, to whom she was very prodigal of her smiles, soon quieted all with the proffer of his arm, and we landed the lady in safety. Not much was to be seen in this little town,—wooden houses with red painted roofs, and a pavement to all appearance deposited by the sea; so after indulging some curiosity and exciting much more, for peeping heads flew to the windows as our motley group passed on, we returned to our own wooden walls. Not, however, to the lively conversation which had usually cheered our tea-table—all were still too subdued, and our safety still

too recent, for us to have become indifferent to it. Alas, that it ever should be otherwise!

Awaking from a night of delicious refreshment, and inhaling the fresh breezes on deck, smoke was seen rounding the corner of the defile, and another large steamer, entering with a majestic curve, anchored alongside of us. It was the *Paris*, from Havre to St. Petersburg, driven to harbour by the same storm, and wearing more outward signs of damage than ourselves. An exchange of courtesies now commenced between these representatives of two such great nations. A party of us went on board her, and, had the touch of a wand transported us to the Palais Royal, the change could not have been more complete. It was Paris itself, and Paris as if no storm had ever been, or rather as if its reminiscence were worthiest drowned in a Bacchanal. Above seventy passengers were on board, all laughing, flirting, and drinking champagne, with levity in their flushed cheeks, and more than negligence in many a careless costume. As soon as seen we were toasted with loud cries of "Vive l'Angleterre!" by a score of voices and glasses—an honour which our quiet John Bullism received most ungraciously. But there were beautiful creatures among this reckless crew, with falling tresses and loose costumes, like pictures by Sir Peter Lely, and looks as light as if they had studied under the same royal patron,—and French viscomtes with Shakspeare-cut chins,—and Italian Opera singers with bold flashing gaze,—and amongst the rest was a quiet, fair countrywoman, like a drop of pure crystal midst a row of false pearls. We longed to carry her off and give one of our party in exchange.

Quitting this noon-day orgy with disgust, we sought sympathy in the sober grandeur of Nature around, and, climbing the rocks which encompassed the little bay, wandered free as children among a wilderness of granite peaks and blocks, intersected with green selvages of rich moist grass; always gaining higher and higher, each taking the path that best suited his strength, till the panorama became so beautiful as to arrest all steps. Our position had open alternate strips of sea and rock to the view, while the little remote cluster of Christiansand nestled itself secure into its hard grey background, and below us lay a few fishing-barks with slender masts, in humble comparison with the proud steamers of France and England, which seemed swelled to twice their ordinary dimensions in the tiny rock-bound basin which afforded them anchorage. And, while we gazed, a bright flash and a column of white smoke issued from our vessel's side, and seconds after came the dull report, which was first bandied about in heavy sport from the nearer rocks, and then died away in the murmuring confusion of repetition among the distant defiles. This was our appointed signal: we therefore rapidly descended to the shore, and in our silent row to the ship gazed alternately into the water, lying like a bed of transparent crystal, several fathoms deep, over a thick forest of submarine vegetation, while the searching rays of the noon-day sun drew forth grotesque masses of light and shade, and revealed the forms of strange fish floating among the emerald branches; and at the receding rocks, whose rough sides our feet were scarce destined again to press. The anchor was soon lifted, and off we were to the north seas again, and, order being established, all the passengers, and as many of the crew as could be spared, assembled in the saloon, where a clerical fellow-passenger read the service of the day, with the thanksgiving prayers at sea, to as reverent a congregation as he ever addressed; and thus gratitude having found appropriate terms, cheerfulness returned to all, and our ranks being swelled by our convalescent companions, the dinner-table was as merry as possible.

There is certainly an analogy between naval men and medical men. Neither like to acknowledge the existence of danger. "Thinks I to myself on the night of the storm," said our captain, "you'll be monstrous fortunate, my good fellows, to find yourselves all above water to-morrow morning,—but 'no danger;'—I'll tell you what, sir, you may go seventeen hundred voyages,

and never have such another as this,—but 'no danger!'" Be this as it may, a requisition, destined for the English public journals, has been got up and signed by the principal passengers, representing the danger to which this nefarious mode of lading had exposed the vessel, and giving due praise to the captain, to whose cool courage and excellent navigation it is owing, under Providence, that we are not at this moment lying in that sun-lit forest below.

Our voyage now increased in interest; the coast of Jutland and Kronborg Castle, or, as tradition calls it, Hamlet's Castle, like a square mass on the waters, in sight, and vessels far and near studding the expanse around, and indicating the line of boundary 'twixt sea and sky, which the misty glow of a cloudless sun had almost fused into one.

At Elsineur, that key which unlocks the narrow sluice-gates of the Baltic, an hour's delay occurred to pay those dues which are no mean compensation to Denmark for the scantiness of her absolute territory, and to take in a pilot to conduct us through the narrow slip which alone is navigable of this narrow sound. Our present locality recalled many naval reminiscences; and the new pilot at the helm occasioning a temporary leisure, we came in for some interesting particulars of our captain's life. Deriving his birth from the same county which sent forth Nelson, he had come under the particular charge of this great man—had served in his ship from the almost infantine period of his entering the navy—had assisted at the bombardment of this very castle of Kronborg, which had attempted an opposition to their advance on Copenhagen—and had seen a brother, post-captain at the age of nineteen, killed at his side a few days after his promotion. But with the setting of Nelson's star all advancement ceased; and now, with more deeds to relate, and more wounds to show than many an admiral, he is left a lieutenant after thirty years of service. Many were the anecdotes he related to us of Nelson's simplicity and boundless popularity on board his ship; his personal attachment to him was enthusiastic; but his voice dropped when he alluded to Nelson's evil angel under the most bewitching of female forms, the unfortunate Lady Hamilton. She had lived on board his ship, and gained the hearts of all the younger community, as much by her intercession in cases of petty delinquency, as by her irresistible fascination of person and manner. Altogether our worthy captain's stories, both romantic and nautical, would have been no mean acquisition to a novel-writer—especially as so many of the present day have launched their literary barks upon the ocean; and when the first mate, touching his hat, withdrew him from an audience who listened to each word that fell from his lips as eagerly as the most obedient ship's crew he ever commanded, more than one voice exclaimed, "It is like listening to a tale by Captain Marryat."

It was late in the afternoon when we reached Copenhagen, where we again revelled in quiet rest. Considering its maritime position and royal occupants, Copenhagen presents no imposing aspect, though the fertile meadows and rich foliage around give it an air of peace and plenty. There is something very pleasant in entering a perfectly new place, where you neither take nor leave a character—where you may stare about you, look behind you, and, in short, dispense with all those little decorums which you have the distinct recollection of having learnt with exceeding repugnance during your childhood. We were received and escorted about by a gentleman to whom we had letters, and who was kind in the extreme; but, unfortunately, of many languages which he partially knew, he did not seem to have singled out any one for his particular use. Our conversation was therefore highly polyglotic, accompanied by a profusion of pantomimic smiles, which, with some of the younger members of our party, were near degenerating into something by no means so polite; and thus we wandered through the streets, a very merry group, till nightfall recalled us to the ship; and all further description of Copenhagen must wait for my next.

LETTER THE SECOND.

Copenhagen—The Royal Palace—Late Queen of Denmark—Frauen-Kirche—Thorwaldsen—Passage up the Baltic—Cronstadt—Russian Officers—First impressions of Petersburg—Annoyances of a Russian Custom-house.

COPENHAGEN has a most agreeable aspect within. Wide, straight, modern streets, and narrow, crooked, ancient streets, with edifices of the same alternate character, and canals lined with vessels, make a picturesque and pleasing whole. The houses are most of them handsome, well-built, and Rotterdam-like, with the advantage over the latter of being all in true perpendicular. The ship's detention, lading in fresh coals, and tightening many a bolt which the storm had sorely tried, allowed us several hours for viewing the chief objects of interest. Our first expedition was to the Royal Palace of Christiansborg, burnt down in 1794, and which, though now long restored to more than its former splendour, has never been re-inhabited by the royal family of Denmark. The apartments are very grand in scale, but only half-furnished; here and there an ordinary Kidderminster or Brussels carpet, and glass in the windows, such as our servants'-hall would have grumbled about. Their chief interest, therefore, was confined to some paintings, by a modern Danish artist, Professor Lund, representing the progress of Christianity, executed in a light dry style of colouring, but with a beauty of form and expression which puts him on a par with the Düsseldorf school, from which he appears to have studied. Also four smaller compartments, of Hope, Faith, Love, and Strength, by the same artist, were of truly Raffaellesque beauty. The ball-room, a grand apartment, was adorned under the gallery with a bas-relief of great elegance, by Frend, a Danish sculptor; to all appearance a scholar of this country's pride, the great Thorwaldsen, whose own unfinished contributions to this palace lay scattered on the floors of various rooms above, and are thus seen perhaps to greater advantage now than they will be by the next generation. The subjects are the triumphs of Bacchus, and those of Alexander. In the former the sheep and oxen introduced are especially worth attention; in the latter the figures and horses are in the grandest action. Thorwaldsen has introduced his own profile in an unobtrusive part, but his fine face differs in nothing from the classic heads round, except in superiority of intellectual expression.

One little room especially detained us, being entirely wainscoted, ceiling and all, with different kinds of coloured native woods; and in the striking contrasts and tender gradations, the delicate straw-colours, the pearly greys, the blood reds, and the jet blacks, the Danish forests have decked forth a beautiful palette.

The memory of the unfortunate princess of England, Queen of Denmark, and mother of the present aged monarch, is held in deep respect here, while retributive justice has fallen on that of her step-mother, the queen dowager. Owing, it is said, to the crimes and misery which these walls have witnessed, a superstition hangs over them, and, except for an occasional court ball, this fine palace has been erected to no purpose. The royal family reside in a trumpery edifice encircling a small *place*, through which the chief traffic of the city pours, and which, with discoloured walls, falling plaster, and a broken window in the most conspicuous part, looked anything but the abode of royalty. The country palaces, however, are many, and, ac-

cording to report, of great beauty. In one wing of Christiansborg the royal collection of pictures is kept, and access permitted to the public. These were above nine hundred in number, in good order, and with high-sounding titles; and in truth there were but few whose excellence spoke for itself. Of these the best were chiefly of the old German school—a head by Albert Durer of himself was the *chef-d'œuvre* of the gallery, and a most exquisite production; and a Lucas Cranach, a portrait of an old man, in the same room, was of great value.

The Exchange, close to Christiansborg, and on the verge of a canal, is a striking old brick building, somewhat in the Elizabethan style, with quaint pilasters, and rows of curiously adorned and battlemented attics, and a bronze steeple formed of four dragons reversed, their gaping jaws downwards and their coiled bodies tapering to a point. An antique tower of gigantic circumference, in a remote street, also attracted our attention. This is ascended by a winding paved passage, so wide that Peter the Great, on one occasion, drove to the top with four horses abreast—rather a difficult feat for the animal nearest the centre. Above is what, in fine weather, must be a fine view of town and harbour, but our clear sky had abandoned us, and something approaching to a rain made us begin to think of shelter. The new Frauen-Kirche had, however, to be seen. The English bombardment of 1807 reduced the old structure of this name to ashes; but a new church on the same model has since been completed, adorned outside with some striking bas-reliefs by Thorwaldsen. The chief attraction, however, are the figures of the twelve apostles by the same great sculptor within — colossal statues of such grandeur of design and matchless beauty as alone to repay a journey from England. We lingered here in reverent admiration. The altar-piece, a bas-relief of Christ, is also very pure and touching. Thorwaldsen, now an old man past seventy, but with undiminished vigour of imagination, resides in this his native city, caressed and beloved by all classes. To all Swiss tourists his magnificent lion in the rock at Lucerne, executed before he had ever seen a living monarch of the forest, is a familiar object.

Having thus taken a summary of this city, which well deserves a longer stay, we proceeded to anticipate our good ship dinner most successfully by a delicious lunch at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, the best in Copenhagen. After which, providing ourselves with a few Danish souvenirs, in the shape of some of the toys and woodware for which Copenhagen is famous, we returned, nothing loth, to our home on the waters, and awoke the next morning to another horizon of waves. The weather continuing favourable, our time was chiefly spent on deck, where the mid-day sun was not too sultry, nor the midnight moon too cool for enjoyment. These enormous steamers, while they occupy a middle station between the navy and merchant-service, are equally hostile to both. This swift mode of transporting cargo will supersede many a lagging merchantman, while the good pay of captain and mates, and certain provision attendant on long services, draws, in these times, many a volunteer from the navy, or, what is infinitely more valuable, many an experienced officer, of whom the Admiralty duly acknowledges the merit, but is by no means sorry to let shift for himself. The sailors, however, dislike the steam service; they call them *smoke-jacks*, and object to the dirt, which with every precaution cannot be avoided. Our monster consumed a ton of coals per hour. Meanwhile our interest was confined to observing the motions of the Paris, now sole tenant, with ourselves, of the gulf, which had preceded us from Copenhagen, and which, after alternate passings and repassings, we now fairly left behind; and to the few islands of the Baltic gliding past us; especially that of Hogland, more properly *Hochland* or highland, a mountainous ridge covered with pasture and flocks. But who can feel dulness on board a large ship in fine weather; and what can be more picturesque than the various objects, animate or inanimate, which her decks present? The man at the wheel

was a fine creature, and so elated with taking a place in my sketch-book, that we ran some risk of false steerage.

At Cronstadt, after a voyage of thirteen days, almost twice the average length, we rejoined the world, and lay the first night with a guard-ship alongside, all that was flat, uninteresting, and military around, and a piercing arctic sky above us. Old England, however, nestled deep within our rafters, and we slept that night in our native atmosphere. It was not until the next morning that we felt ourselves truly in a foreign clime, when our double dates, and other strange and double-faced things connected with Russian experience, commenced. A visit from an officer with several subordinates, whose beauties truly lay not in their exterior, was our first initiator —and a more uncouth, ill-mannered set never were seen. Our little captain, with a shrewd sparkle of the eye, bowing, and rubbing his hands, informed them, in his most urbane English, that he spoke nothing else, but was equally glad to see them; and finding all this civility secured but little attention, he directed their eyes to a decanter of spirits, which was better received. What they did on board would be difficult to say. They usurped a great deal of room in our saloon, and produced an immense number of sheets of a substance which Russia has agreed to call paper; and the subordinates wrote as fast as they could, and the superior flourishing his sword-arm signed the same, with a mysterious concatenation of dots and dashes after. Then everything on board was sealed with lead seals, from the hatches over the cargo to the minutest article of the passengers' luggage—from those much-reviled masses of lead of twenty tons each to the innocent bandbox of not so many ounces. We were now anxious to proceed on to Petersburg, and awaited only further dots and dashes from a still richer pair of epaulettes hidden in the depths of Cronstadt. But here our first lesson was taken. Greatly to our triumph, the laggart Paris had been seen entering Cronstadt harbour only that morning, when now, equally to our dismay, we perceived the passengers descending very happily from her decks into the *Pyroskaff*, or small steamboat, which plies for that purpose between Petersburg and Cronstadt, waving their handkerchiefs most saucily to us, as if to say, "Ha! the tables are turned now." They, in truth, better understood the intimate understanding which exists between Russian justice and Russian roubles, by virtue of which the former always abdicates to the latter. Our descent into the Pyroskaff, not being facilitated by any such smoothing measures, was not admissible until three in the afternoon. Some of our number were going to their homes in Petersburg, others had left none in England; but there was one among them who looked back on the vessel as on the last link which bound her with home, and forward with a sense of loneliness not always cheered with courage.

Here also we were not relieved from guard. Three individuals in coarse uniforms—for here every being seems to wear a uniform more or less beautiful—accompanied us on to the Pyroskaff, and, lest peradventure we should bribe the captain to land it midway, or in any way to facilitate our suspicious purposes, kept an unremitting watch over our luggage. But perhaps our bribes had better have commenced nearer home. About our three hours' passage to Petersburg I can't say much. The air above was very keen, the couches below very soft, and the scene on either hand being a mere dismal swamp, many of our party dozed most comfortably till such time as Petersburg became visible, when we all hastened on deck to take the first impressions of this capital. Behind us Cronstadt had sunk into the waters, and before us Petersburg seemed scarcely to emerge from the same, so invisible was the shallow tablet of land on which it rests. The mosque-like form of the Greek churches—the profusion of cupola and minaret—with treble domes painted blue with silver stars, or green with gold stars, and the various gilt spires, starting at intervals from the low city, and blazing like

flaming swords in the cold rays of a Russian October setting sun, gave it an air of Orientalism little in accordance with the gloomy, grey mantle of snow clouds, in which all this glitter was shrouded. The loftiest and most striking object was the Isaac's church, still behung with forests of scaffolding, which, while they revealed its gigantic proportions, gave but few glimpses of its form. Altogether I was disappointed at the first *coup d'œil* of this capital—it has a brilliant face, but wants height to set it off. The real and peculiar magnificence of Petersburg, however, consists in thus sailing apparently upon the bosom of the ocean, into a city of palaces. Herein no one can be disappointed. Granite quays of immense strength now gradually closed in upon us, bearing aloft stately buildings modelled from the Acropolis, while successive vistas of interminable streets, and canals as thickly populated, swiftly passing before us, told us plainly that we were in the midst of this northern capital ere we had set foot to ground. Here all observations were suddenly suspended by a halt in the Pyroskaff, which ceased its paddles and lay motionless in the centre of the stream. In our simplicity we had imagined that the Cronstadt precautions had sufficed to qualify us for entering Russia, and reckoned on drawing up alongside the quay, and being allowed, after our many dangers and detentions, quietly to step on shore. But we were sad novices. Half an hour passed thus away, which to people cold, hungry, and weary,—what should we have done without that nice nap?—seemed interminable; when a rush of fresh uniforms boarded us from another vessel, who proceeded to turn out the gentlemen's pockets and the ladies' reticules, and seemed themselves in most admirable training for pickpockets. Then one by one we were led across a plank to an adjoining ship, where they hurried us down to a committee of grave dons sitting below, who scrutinised first our passports and then our features, and proceeded to note down a descriptive table of the latter of such a latitudinarian nature, that, in the scrawled credentials of identity which each received, no mother would have recognised her child. Colours, complexions, and dimensions were jumbled with utter disregard of private feelings.—Every gentleman had *une barbe noire*, every lady *la figure ovale*, and it was well if these were not reversed. These were accompanied by printed directions as to where to go, what to do, and how in general to behave ourselves whilst in his Imperial Majesty's dominions.

At length the moment of release came, and we were permitted to touch terra firma, such as it is in Petersburg, and carried off to the custom-house, a large building on the English quay. Here an immense salle, strewed with hundreds of opened and unopened boxes, and dotted with loitering groups of *la Jeune France*, received us. With these latter we exchanged some looks of malice, as they lounged about, some yawning in weary impatience, others wringing their hands in impotent anger, while a black-looking being, with face like a bull-dog and paws like a bear, fumbled and crumbled a delicate *garderobe* without mercy—stirring up large and small, tender and tough, things precious and things vile, ruthlessly together, to the unutterable indignation and anguish of the proprietor. To witness the devastation of an English writing-desk was a curious sight to an uninterested spectator. First, the lock excited great anger, and was a convincing proof that little was to be done with Bramah by brute force; and, this passed, there ensued as striking an illustration of the old adage of a bull in a china-shop as could possibly be devised. Every touch was mischief. They soiled the writing-paper and spilt the ink; mixed up wax, wafers, and water-colours. Then, in their search for Russian bank-notes, the introduction of which is strictly interdicted, they shook out the blotting-book, whence a shower of letters of introduction, cards of address, and a variety of miscellaneous documents, floated to distant corners of the salle—ransacked the private drawer, of which they were perfectly *au fait*—displaced all the steel paraphernalia, and then crammed them into

their wrong places, cutting their fingers at the same time—the only action which afforded the spectator any unmixed pleasure; and now, smarting with the pain, flung down the lid, and left the grumbling owner to gather his scriptural fragments together as he best could. Beyond the writing-desk they did not choose to proceed. It was past the regulation time, and instead of allowing the weary traveller, as is usual in such cases, to take his carpet-bag of necessaries, the smallest article was denied with a stolid pertinacity, which intimated no great sympathy on their parts for the comforts of clean linen.

All this is, and must be, most disgusting to a traveller's feelings. This is not the intention of any custom-house in the world, or, if so of Russia, more's the pity. At best all custom-house regulations, in the case of the mere traveller, can but be considered as a necessary evil, which further falls on him just at the time when he is least fitted to bear unnecessary fatigue, detention, or vexation. The courtesy and hospitality of nations therefore demands that the needful forms be conducted with the utmost kindness and politeness, while good sense dictates their being submitted to in the same spirit. Few travellers remain long enough in Russia to wear off the disagreeable impressions of their inauguration scene, whereas I have seen foreigners, and Russians among the number, whose civil reception and gentlemanly treatment at the English custom-house and alien-office inspired them with instant respect for the land they trod. And, after all, in which of these two countries are these regulations the least evaded? decidedly not in Russia. Those who are received with suspicion will not be the most inclined to respect the laws.

In this frame of mind a party of us took the route to the English boarding-house, kept by Mrs. Wilson, in the *Rue des Galères*, English Quay, where rest and refreshment were promptly given, and never more gratefully received.

LETTER THE THIRD.

Mrs. Wilson's boarding-house—Baron S.—Loan of a Soldier—Sight-seeing—Rebuilding of the Winter Palace—The Islands of Petersburg—The Casan Church—Academy of Arts—Brülloff's picture—General character of buildings—Pavement and glass—English eccentricities.

It must not be imagined that, because established in an English boarding-house, I am met by familiar habits, or surrounded with familiar objects. We are apt to forget how far we are dependent on English-bred servants, and English-built houses, for the quiet course of comfort which in our native land seems as natural as the air we breathe. Otherwise I can join in the highest possible commendation of this well-conducted and most respectable establishment, which I should doubtless praise more unqualifiedly had I tried any other here. By foreigners, who have tasted the sweets of English comfort at the fountain head, it is preferred to every other house of accommodation in Petersburg, and Count Matuschewitz has no other abode when here.

My letters of introduction soon procured their bearer much kind attention; and first and foremost among those who exercised these courtesies towards a stranger was Baron S., aide-de-camp to the emperor, and fort-major of Petersburg—a pale young man, seemingly sinking beneath the weight of a gorgeous uniform, who introduced himself with the utmost simplicity and kindness, and put at my immediate disposal his house, his horses, and everything he could command. These were soothing sounds after the irritation of the douane. As an earnest of his intentions he further begged to leave at my disposal for the present, and for as long a time as I should think fit to retain—a soldier. As he evidently attached no more importance to this proposition, and perhaps less, than if he had offered me an extra pair of walking shoes, all scruple on my part would have been misplaced; nevertheless, it was with undisguised amusement that I saw one of these military machines mount immoveable guard at my door. He was a brow-beat, rusty-moustached, middle-sized man, with hard lines of toil on his sun-burnt face—his hair, according to the compulsory and unfortunately disfiguring system of cleanliness adopted in the Russian army, clipped till the head was barely covered or coloured, and his coarse drab uniform hanging loosely about him: for soldiers' coats are here made by contract according to one regulation size, and, like the world, are too wide for some, too tight for others. But the sense of the ludicrous extended itself to my hostess, on my requesting to have a chair placed for him. "A chair!" she exclaimed, "what should he do with it?—Standing is rest for him:" and in truth the Russian soldier is like his horse,—standing and lying are his only postures of repose. I found my poor sentinel a willing, swift, and most useful messenger in this city of scanty population and enormous distances, and, without much self-applause, it may be added he also found me a kind mistress, for the tyrannical, inhuman mode in which inferiors are here addressed is the first trait in the upper classes which cannot fail to disgust the English traveller. Our communication was restricted nevertheless to a smile on my side, as my orders were interpreted to him, and to "*Sluschouss*," "I hear," upon his receiving the same. And these significant words are indeed the motto of the lower orders.

As the first plunge into sight-seeing was not the most likely method of renovating an exhausted traveller, the

colonel judiciously proposed my commencing acquaintance with Petersburg by a few drives through the streets and in the environs. The most magnificent object, if you can select where all are magnificent, is the line of Palace Quay upon the Neva—beginning with the Winter Palace—united by covered bridges with the Hermitage—this again connected by magnificent links with the great mass of the Marble Palace, and so on to the summer garden—while marble vases and lions, of colossal size, bring the eye down to the granite banks of the stream, where every column and gilded cupola is reflected in increased brilliancy. A casual observer would hardly remark the traces of fire in the grand structure of the Winter Palace. The entire shell stands perfect, though, within, not a stone is left in its place. Two thousand workmen are now swarming about this vast hive, and the architect, Kleinmichael, straining every nerve to redeem his pledge of presenting this palace, ready inside and out, as it stood before, for the celebration of the Easter fêtes. In one light this destructive fire has proved a blessing; for the custom of consigning to solitude those suites of rooms occupied by a deceased sovereign had here closed so many of the finest apartments, that in a few more successions the reigning monarch would have been fairly turned out by the ghosts of his predecessors. The gilt cross, on the cupola of the private chapel of the palace, resisted the fury of the element, and glowing with increased brilliancy in the light of the furnace around it, was watched by many an anxious eye in the crowd of believers beneath, who ascribe its preservation to miraculous intervention. This idea has proved a powerful engine in the hands of the architect, for under the conviction that a blessing rests on the palace the workmen toil with double assiduity at its renovation. Thence we proceeded down the splendid Nevski—over a graceful iron suspension bridge with gilt tips; passing the palace where Paul met his fate, in a room conspicuous by one window alone, and that a single sheet of plate glass.—Then past Peter's original little house, a perfect Dutchman—the first humble stone of this great capital, which occupies one corner of the summer garden, planted also by him. These are the resort of the beau monde in the spring, before they disperse into the country; and, pointing out to me the stunted elms, already almost dismantled of their scanty foliage, my companion observed, with more of complacency than of humility in his manner, that they gave *shade* in the summer! Leaving these transparent thickets, we crossed one of the bridges of boats over the Neva, and entered the fortress on the Wassili-Ostroff, or Basil's island, the guard turning out at every barrier to salute the fort-major of Petersburg. Here many of the state prisoners, from the military delinquent of a few weeks' detention to the captive for life, are confined. The church was the only accessible part, the taper gilt spire of which is one of the most striking objects in Petersburg from a distance. The interior was gaudy with gilding and drapery. Service was going forward—the priests, with their wavy locks flowing on their shoulders, throwing about incense, muttering the mass, and staring at the strangers with equal unconcern. The most interesting objects were the tombs of several of the late Zars, including Alexander, and all of Catherine II. that could die, and around hung various captured standards—the graceful crescent denoting whence they had been wrested.

We now continued our route to Kamenoi-Ostroff, or the stone island, to Jelaghine, Krestofsky, &c., and other islands, forming a miniature archipelago, on which the emperor and the Grand Duke Michael, as well as many of the nobility, have summer residences. Here a pretty distribution of wood, water, and villa faintly recalled the idea of Virginia Water, though entirely on a stunted scale. The oak is seen here, but scarce rising above a shrub. We entered the imperial Datsch, or summer residence, at Jelaghine. The house is very simple: logs of wood were burning in the open grates, and a cast-iron staircase leading to the upper

rooms: on the third story was a small chapel, and behind the altar a sanctuary, which my woman's foot was forbidden to enter. This is the rule in all Greek places of worship. The Datsches of the nobility are all of wood, the emperor's alone being of stone, and tortured into every incongruous form that bad taste can devise; the whole touched up and picked out with painted cornices and pilasters, in red and yellow ochre, and, once done, left to the mercy of the seasons. Each has just enough ground around to give the idea of an English tea-garden, with every appurtenance of painted wooden arch, temple, and seat to confirm it. At the same time it is here the established idea that such houses and such gardens are precise fac-similes of an English country residence, and I fear my kind companion was a little chagrined at my not accepting this piece of homage to my native land. In this neighbourhood is also a Russian village, wooden cottages with deep roofs, and galleries running round like the Swiss, ornamented with most delicately carved wood: of course here was also plenty of red, blue, and yellow, for it seems that without these primary colours little can be done. The love of red, especially, is so inherent a taste in Russia, that *red* and *beautiful* are, in a popular sense, expressed by the same word. But this is evidently the show village of the capital, and almost entirely let to families for the summer. As for the roads, they were ankle-deep in mud, and such as an English squire would hardly have suffered in his vicinity.

Our sight-seeing, properly speaking, commenced with the Casan church, which stands like a bat with extended wings on an open space just where the St. Catherine's Canal intersects the Nevski; the body of the church being small in comparison with a grand semicircular peristyle of fifty-six columns, placed in rows of four deep. In the *place* before the church are two magnificent statues of Kutusoff, Prince of Smolenski, and of Barclay de Tolly. Altogether this edifice is a superb specimen of what Russian architects, Russian quarries, and Russian mines can produce. The grand entrance door in the centre beneath the peristyle is a master-piece of genius. It is divided into ten compartments of subjects in bas-relief from the Old Testament, the intermediate spaces occupied with figures of saints in haut-relief, and heads starting from circular frames; all of the most exquisite design, expression, and finish. We entered by a small side door, and seemed transported in a moment to some hall of the genii: riches glittered around in fabulous profusion, while a subdued light, a stupefying perfume, and a strain of unearthly harmony disposed the senses for mysterious impressions. Pillars of polished marble, in one solid mass from top to base, with gilt pedestals and capitals, supported the roofs in couples. The altar was an open arch of dead and bright silver, in a frame-work of gold, supported on semi-transparent jasper columns, and closed behind with a drapery of crimson velvet. The altar railings were each a bright, heavy colossus of solid silver, any one of which would have furnished a very respectable sideboard. Several huge candlesticks, eight feet high, of the same virgin metal, were burning with candles of all sizes, from the pillar of wax to the lowliest taper, the various votive offerings of pilgrims, before shrines of incalculable riches, consisting of pictures of the Virgin and Child, or of particular saints; the face and flesh parts alone being painted, and those most barbarously, for the Greek church appears to qualify the idolatry by the furthest possible departure from nature; real precious stones forming the appropriate colours in head-dress or vest, and pearls, woven over, representing the white drapery. In the centre from the dome hung a gigantic chandelier of silver, over a circular mosaic pavement of the most graceful designs. The priests, clad like sorcerers, were murmuring their incantations, and flinging about incense, while invisible voices in seraph tones chanted the responses. And then to turn from all this blaze and gorgeousness, from walls of silver, and hangings of pearls, to the poor creatures who at this mo-

ment seemed the only objects of such display;—abject beings with tattered garments, decrepit bodies, and animal countenances, who stood crossing themselves, bowing at intervals before the shrines till their foreheads resounded on the marble floor, and staring around, gaping, or spitting, between every prostration,—old hags of nuns in filthy attire,—wretched cripples and loathsome beggars, whom one seed pearl from the Virgin's shoulder-knot would have enriched, but to whom, in their faith, the sacrilegious thought, doubtless, never occurred. Here also the trophies of conquered armies hung around; but this time the eagle was the emblem. Kutusoff's tomb is the only monument in the interior, and this is shortly to be removed. This church is dedicated to the holy Virgin of Casan, so called from a picture of the Virgin in the town of Casan, which has an immense reputation for miracles. It is also distinguished by the peculiarity of two unequal transepts; not, as some have alleged, from the peculiar form of the Greek cross, but simply for want of space on the canal side to continue the building.

Having thus taken the aggregate of a Russian church interior, for the rest are mere repetitions of the same barbaric splendour, unsanctified by true art, we proceeded to the Academy of Arts, on the Wassili-Ostrof. This is one of those outwardly splendid piles, with ten times more space than in England would be allowed for the same object, ten times more out of repair, and ten thousand times dirtier. At the ceremony of Russian baptism the sign of the cross is made on the lips to say nothing bad, on the eyes to see nothing bad, on the ears to hear nothing bad—and, it must be supposed, on the nose also, to smell nothing bad; for the Russians do not seem inconvenienced by the trials to which this organ is exposed on entering their dwellings. But to return to this odoriferous academy—the halls and staircase are all on a grand scale, and appropriately adorned with casts from the Laocoon, the Gladiator, and other celebrated statues of antiquity. A stripling population, students in uniform, and cadets from the colleges, to whom it was a half-holiday, were swarming in the extensive rooms; seemingly under no restraint except that of a dancing-master, before whom about fifty of them were dancing quadrilles with much grace and expression in a cloud of dust. They seemed to consider this very great fun, and twisted their slim male partners about most emphatically, while many a laughing eye turned upon the unbidden spectators, who, to own the truth, loitered longer in this room than the occasion required. But in these times, when good dancing has proved a quick step to advancement in Russia, this accomplishment is not to be neglected. The walls are lined with eight cartoons of boar-hunts and sylvan sports by Rubens and Snyders—the latter quite undeniable—of great merit, though we could procure no information of their history. Also a fine marble bust of this magnificent emperor, which, had it been dug up in classic ground, would have been declared a Grecian demi-god—it was impossible to pass without admiration. I wish his douane were a little milder.

But the great attraction was Brülloff's picture of the fall of Pompeii—an immense canvass—at least 20 feet wide by 15 high, which now ranks as one of the lions of the capital. This picture is a gallery in itself, and one of absorbing interest. Above the scene hangs the dense black cloud, as described by Pliny. To the right this is broken by a stream of forked lightning, whose livid light blends horribly with the red-hot sulphureous glare of the volcano, the outline of which is dimly visible. In the centre of the picture, where the light falls strongest, lies the body of a female, her arms extended—a crying infant lying upon her, with one little hand clinging to the drapery beneath her bosom: she has evidently been killed by a fall from a chariot, one broken wheel of which is close to her, and which is seen borne along at full speed in the distance by two terrified horses, while the driver, the reins twisted round his wrist, is dragged behind them. Forwarder, on the right, is a group of

father, mother, and three sons: the aged father, trying with one hand to ward off the shower of ashes, is carried in the arms of the eldest son, who, helmeted like a soldier, is carefully picking his way among the falling stones. The younger, quite a lad, is supporting the old man's feet, and gazing with a countenance of agony at a tottering monument. The second son is supplicating his mother to trust herself also in his arms; but, half extended on the ground, she gently repulses him, and affectionately urges his own safety. The expression and lighting of this group is beyond all praise. In the right corner of the picture is a lover bearing the body of his fainting mistress; from the chaplet on her head, and other bridal ornaments, they appear to have been just united. Behind is a grey horse in full light, furious with terror, his rider clinging with every muscle; while, half hidden, appears a frantic figure, its nails fastened into the animal's back in the attempt to mount. On the left of the centre is a terror-stricken family —father, mother, and two children, cowering half naked beneath the red-hot hail, and forming a dark mass in opposition to a confusion of figures in full light behind them—some escaping terrified from the tottering portal of a building—others bearing children or valuables in their arms—a priest with the golden vessels of the temple—and in the midst an artist, Brülloff himself, carrying his box of implements on his head. The picture terminates with a group of Christians, with an anachrontic chalice and censer, intended by their pious resignation and attitude of devotion to contrast with the wild, hopeless terror around. But these are the least effective of the composition.

The critics have been busy upon the redundancy of interest and the multiplication of groups which the artist has crowded together; but as these strictly unite in telling the same story, and as the interest is chiefly concentrated in the principal group, this objection does not seem more legitimate here than in any of the crowded scenes of adoration, terror, or rejoicing, those of Mr. Martin omitted, which are familiar to the world. The more objectionable parts are the disjointed buildings on the right and left, with statues bowing forward in the act of falling, which interrupt rather than heighten the intended effect. Living objects may be given in every transient movement; the momentary flash may be portrayed because never viewed in any other form; the rocking billows may be imitated because seldom seen at rest; but to fix a mass of stone in a position which it can neither sustain nor the eye follow for one instant, is as much in opposition to the laws of art as to those of gravity. Otherwise the drawing is magnificent, the colouring vividly true, and the effect of light and shade, and the meretricious glow afforded by the nature of the subject, sufficient to have seduced a less masterly artist from the severity of design which Brülloff has observed. At the same time it would have been physiologically more interesting had this first Russian painter of any eminence evinced a distinctive national character, however meagre or stiff, instead of continuing in the long-worn elements of the Occidental schools. But this may be simply accounted for by the supposition, generally adopted here, that Brülloff's nationality lies only in an assumed termination to his name, after the precedents of Madame Bellochi and M. Turnerelli, familiar to the English world; though the object here sought being precisely inverse, it is more creditable to the sense of the nation.

This picture was painted for M. Demidoff, for the sum, it is said, of 80,000 roubles, or nearly £4000, and by him presented to his imperial majesty, who placed it in this academy. Another just completed, a Crucifixion, by Brülloff, forms the altar-piece to the new Lutheran church. The body of the Saviour is splendidly drawn, but otherwise he has infused no freshness of idea into this oft-used subject; and a Predella picture below, the administration of the Sacrament, is infinitely higher in interest. Inferior, however, as this altar-piece is to his Fall of Pompeii, it is nevertheless ill bestowed; or rather it would be diffi-

cult to say what grade of merit would be compatible with this temple of abject architecture, only to be classed with the mountebank churches of our George I.'s time. Alternately Grecian and Saxon without, and painted within in a gewgaw taste, better befitting a theatre than a place of worship, this edifice unfortunately occupies a conspicuous position on the Nevski Prospect.

With this exception, I hardly passed a building that did not in some way lay claim to my admiration. So much, however, has been written, and most justly so, in praise of the masonry of Petersburg, that any further comment on my part is superfluous. On the other hand, considering how our English feelings have been wounded, in the reflection that most of the beautiful edifices of the olden time which adorn our capital are placed where they can neither be approached nor appreciated, while those of the modern are allowed space and air, as if only to expose their defects, I consider that a little conscientious detraction of these northern upstarts may be more acceptable. The buildings, it is true, are with rare exception magnificent or graceful, and generally consistent in style; but as they are built so are they left; and as neither a Russian sun nor a Russian frost can be trusted for gentle treatment, the stucco falls off, the paint blisters up, the wood-work decays, and none of these items being renewed, the edifice soon exhibits a want of finish, which an English eye must lose some of its home recollections to overlook. But, habituated to the sight, no Russian eye is offended by this mixture of shabbiness and grandeur. Added to this, their houses are wretchedly *glazed* and wretchedly *shod*. Except an occasional square of plate glass, everywhere beautiful, not a pane is seen through which a beauty would care to be criticised; nor, beyond the Nevski, which is laid with a level mosaic pavement of wood, is there a foot of pavement in St. Petersburg which would allow you to converse in an open carriage with this same beauty in comfort. Around the winter palace it is execrable—such holes as an infant Zarowitch might be lost in; and, lest this should seem overdrawn, I can add what I myself was eye-witness to, viz., an Ischvouschik composedly washing his droschky in a colossal puddle, full in sight of the palace windows, after which he washed his face and hands in the same, and drove off. There remains, however, to be said, that in a country which, seven months in the year, strews the streets with a white smooth pavement of its own, the rough flag-stones of art cannot be so carefully tended as elsewhere. And now, lest my pen should be deemed invidious, let us turn to the splendid granite blocks in which the Neva and all tributary streams and canals are bound; solid, polished piles which no mortar has ever defaced, being cramped together with iron: or let us acknowledge the patronage which Russia has afforded our English ironworks, which here relieve these sturdy masses with a border as elegant as it is light, while the various canals, the Fontanka, the Moika, and the St. Catherine's Canal, all similar in size, and clad with the same monotony of granite, were it not for the purposely varied designs of their graceful iron palisadings, would greatly perplex the stranger. Many of the chief noblemen's palaces are faced with cast-iron *grilles* of the most costly workmanship, bearing the badge of Oriental taste in the richly gilt arrow-head; while the palisading of the summer gardens is so renowned, that the story of our countryman who came expressly from England to see it, and *immediately returned*, is here considered as a very credible piece of homage. But the many imbecilities ascribed to English travellers by foreigners would fill a chapter in themselves. It is a pity they are so often true.

LETTER THE FOURTH.

The Hermitage—Qualifications for sight-seeing—Promenade on the pavements of the Nevski—Disproportion of population—Duke de Leuchtenberg and Grand Duchess Marie—English Church—English Factory—Petersburg from the tower of the Admiralty—Its insecure position—High winds—A Russian marriage ceremony.

To attempt to describe in one letter a building groaning with the accumulated collections of an ambitious, unsparing, absolute, and, in some few instances, discriminating imperial dynasty—one which would require visits of weeks in succession, and engross a volume of description—would be as vain as to pretend to comprise the British Museum in a few pages. For a detail of the far-famed Hermitage, fitting and well-named retreat for such an imperial anchorite as Catherine II., I must refer you to works of great length already devoted exclusively to it, without the aid of which my own superficial view would have been of little avail. After undergoing the positive labour of viewing a palace of this description—after running through forty magnificent and glittering apartments, beyond the first ten of which the powers of attention can no longer possibly be commanded, the miserable sight-seer returns with a head swimming with the colours and forms of every school, through which the delicious Alba Madonna, by Raphael; the pale fast-worn Christ, by Leonardo da Vinci; a whole succession of valuable lights, by Rembrandt; a never-to-be-forgotten Pordenone; and, for the sake of nationality, the Infant Hercules strangling the Serpent, by our Sir Joshua, though not among the most attractive of his productions, are dimly struggling; while Dresden jars and Malachite vases; heads of Russian marshals and bodies of Thibet idols; golden trees, peacocks, owls, and mushrooms; the grown-up playthings of a semi-barbaric court; portfolios of first-rate prints; cases of gems and cameos, and whole swarms of natural history, are jostling each other in hopeless confusion; all centering in the enchanting vista of Raphael's exquisite Loggie, of which a perfect fac-simile here exists, and which alone is more than enough for the time I spent there. How then can I draw light out of this chaos? No; the Hermitage must be left to those who have given, or can give, it all the requisite time. But no English heart will traverse this gallery without murmuring at the national indifference which could first allow the Houghton Collection to be transported hither, or, worse still, at the inexplicable state economy that only a few months back permitted Nicholas I. to lay his iron grasp upon a few of the finest pictures which ever entered or certainly ever quitted the English shores—I mean those choice morsels from Mr. Coesvelt's gallery, which I last had the pleasure of seeing in his house on Carlton Terrace.

In these travelling times an inherent talent for sight-seeing is a blessing not sufficiently to be prized, one equally commendable in its exercise as in its reward. It includes many Christian virtues, and a large share of corporeal strength. It requires its possessor to be meek, long-suffering, and believing; to be patient where he feels no interest, and to deny himself where he does; to be able to watch long, fast long, and stand long, and, finally, to kiss the rod when he has done; or, to choose another simile, sight-seeing taken in drops is a cordial, in draughts a poison. Between Baron S. and myself there is a perpetual amiable contest, as to which shall show most, or

see least. He tells me that he has my future good too much at heart to mind my present fatigue, and I tell him that, like many an ally, he came to help, but stays to conquer. With military precision he parcels Petersburg out into districts, lays his plan of attack overnight, and the next morning to a minute he is at my door, and I am whisked off to fresh feasts, where his high epaulettes always procure admission, before the last are more than swallowed. Altogether I fear he has to do with a most thankless recruit: I wait with patience and attend with submission, but, the morning's work over, hasten to evaporate all newly-acquired knowledge, and compromise matters with my kind task-master by a graceless stroll on the cold sunny pavements of the Nevski.

Here it is that Russians of all garbs and ranks pass before you. Here stands the Ischvouschik, loitering carelessly beneath the trees of the avenue, who, catching your steady gaze, starts up and displays a row of beautiful teeth beneath his thickly-bearded lip, and, pointing to his droschky, splutters out "Kudi vam ugodno?" or "Whither does it please you?" Here stalks the erect Russian peasant, by birth a serf, and in gait a prince, the living effigy of an old patriarch, bearded to the waist, his kaftan of sheep-skin, or any dark cloth, wrapt round him, the ample front of which, confined at the waist by a belt of bright colours, contains all that another would stow in a pocket, literally portraying the words of Scripture, "full measure shall men pour into your bosom." Contrary to all established rule, he wears his shirt, always blue or red, over his trowsers, his trowsers under his boots, and doubtless deems this the most sensible arrangement. And look! here go a posse of Russian foot-soldiers, with close-shorn head and face, and brow-beat look, as little of the martial in their dusky attire as of glory in their hard lives, the mere drudges of a review, whom Mars would disown. Not so the tiny Circassian, light in limb and bright in look, flying past on his native barb, armed to the teeth, with eyes like loadstars, which the cold climate cannot quench. Now turn to the slender Finn, with teeth of pearl, and hair so yellow that you mistake it for a lemon-coloured handkerchief peeping from beneath his round hat: or see, among the whirl of carriages three and four abreast in the centre of the noble street, that handsome Tartar coachman, his hair and beard of jet, sitting gravely, like a statue of Moses, on his box, while the little postillion dashes on with the foremost horses, ever and anon throwing an anxious look behind him, lest the ponderous vehicle, which the long traces keep at half a street's distance, should not be duly following; and within lolls the pale Russian beauty, at whose careless bidding they all are hurrying forward, looking as apathetic to all the realities of life as any other fine lady in any other country would do. These are the pastimes which the traveller finds in the streets of Petersburg, which make the hours fly swiftly by, further beguiled by the frequent question and frequent laugh, as you peep into the various magazines, listen to the full-mouthed sounds, and inhale the scent of Russian leather, with which all Petersburg is most appropriately impregnated.

No one can assert, however, that this is a gay capital: its population is one of wheels more than of men, without whose restless whirl the streets would be as lifeless as London at four o'clock in the morning. Here are no busy, noisy pedestrians, that mainspring of gaiety in other cities; and of the few who do tread her huge squares and drawn-out streets not above one woman is seen to four men. It is true the court and beau monde were still at their summer haunts, but these only contribute an artificial effervescence during the fashionable part of the day, and cannot be classed as a characteristic of activity. The imperial family are not yet returned from Zarskoe Selo to the Anitchkoff palace, their temporary residence—but, meanwhile, the great topic of the day is the arrival of the young Duke de Leuchtenberg, the fiancé of the eldest grand duchess, Marie. "Not a fine party for her,"

as the Bavarian Chargé d'Affaires, translating his French ideas more candidly than correctly, observed to me; but an imperial instance of a marriage of inclination, though by some busybodies declared to be restricted to the grand duchess.

Yesterday being Sunday, my first drive was to the English church, an institution requiring no date to remind us that it was founded in the old time when attachment to the church was not questioned, and liberal endowments thought the wisest economy, and which now, by mainly contributing to keep up the real national spirit, makes a worthy return to the descendants of those who established it. The church itself is a splendid building on the English quay, richly fitted up, and capable of holding a congregation of twelve hundred. The living is of considerable value, and now worthily occupied by the Rev. Ed. Law, whose residence is under the same roof with the church, with those of the clerk and sexton adjoining, all maintained on the same liberal footing. In truth, nowhere can England be seen to better advantage than in the person of the British Factory—a body of English merchants who settled here in the middle of last century,—as soon, indeed, as this new capital afforded any commercial advantages, and who have firmly transplanted to this northern soil the fairest blossoms from the parent tree. Every charitable custom is perpetuated—every hospitable anniversary celebrated—and every public rejoicing or mourning observed with jealous loyalty. The families, most of them highly aristocratic in descent, keep carefully aloof from all Russian society, and an intermarriage with a Russian is a circumstance of the rarest occurrence. At the same time this very adherence to national forms—prejudices if you will—has procured them universal respect. It is a mistake to suppose that foreigners like us the better for imitating them. The emperor knows that his sixteen hundred English children will always respect the existing laws, and wishes, perhaps, that the rest of his family were as peaceable. It is true they grumble a little occasionally at a new ukase, but this is their prerogative whether abroad or at home. Owing to the English habits of business—their punctuality, exactness, and probity,—many a practical, useful institution has arisen of which the Russians equally benefit. It will be easily imagined that the straightforward English merchant, equally accustomed and compelled to trust his dependents in the various responsibilities of a counting-house, found but a slippery colleague in the merry, lazy, thieving Russian; at the same time the wages of the English to their inferiors being as much higher as their treatment was more humane, it became the interest of both parties to reform an evil which gave the one a bad servant and deprived the other of a good master. A company, or *artell*, as it is termed in Russian, has, therefore, been formed, which pledges itself for the honesty of its members, or makes good the deficiencies which a dishonest member may occasion. The privileges and certainty of good employment are the inducement to enter, and there is not an English merchant house in Petersburg who does not employ one or more of these Artellschiks. And thus a principle, seemingly inherent in the English nature, that of making it a man's interest to be honest, has here engendered a habit which subsequently may claim a higher motive.

Upon the conclusion of service we drove to the Admiralty, the shops all open, and no sign of the sabbath, and after the due delay which accompanies all things, whether great or small, in Russia, obtained leave to ascend the tower. Emerging at the base of the gilt spire we stood among the colossal statues which adorn the platform, and were greeted with a most peculiar view. Petersburg, with its Oriental spires and domes, and many tributary islands, lay couched low beneath us, while, far as the eye could reach, spread a naked waste of land and water, each equally flat, and dotted as sparingly as possible with signs of life. The only mountainous forms were presented in a sky of arctic clouds in every variety of bright, cold colour, which, hanging

over the distant walls and shipping of Cronstadt, melted imperceptibly into the horizon, and presented a background as glorious as evanescent.

No one can judge of the daring position of Petersburg who has not mounted one of these her artificial heights, and viewed the immense body of waters in which she floats, like a bark overladen with precious goods; while the autumn waves, as if maddened by the prospect of the winter's long imprisonment, play wild pranks with her resistless shores, deriding her false foundations, and overturning in a few hours the laboured erections of as many years. We wanted no one to recount the horrors of an inundation, for this is the season when the waters levy their annual tribute. A south-west wind was lifting the gulf furiously towards the city—the Neva was dashing along, rejoicing in its strength—tossing the keels of the vessels over the granite quays, disjointing the planks of the floating bridges, and threatening all who ventured across with sea-sickness, if with no worse danger. The water had already taken possession of some of the wretched outskirts of the city, adding more misery where there seemed enough before, while flags floated from the tower where we stood to warn the inhabitants of their danger; and before we quitted our station, guns from the fortress, the appointed signal on such occasions, bade those remove who had aught to save. But pleasant sites and natural advantages are the easy tools of a limited monarchy—nought but an absolute will could have compelled a splendid capital from the depths of a swamp. The founding of Petersburg might be the grant of civilisation to Russia, but it was also the sign manual of autocracy, and Peter the Great reasoned more like the despot than the philanthropist, in foreseeing that wherever the Imperial Queen Bee thought fit to alight, there would the faithful or servile Russians swarm.

But now it is time to quit our station, which a thermometer at 10° of Fahrenheit rendered no enviable eminence; therefore, descending as we came, we traversed the reeling bridge in safety, and had given up all thought of further novelties for the day, when, passing the interminable Corps des Cadets — the longest façade in the known world, our attention was caught by the most delicious strains of vocal music, and observing the chapel part lighted up, and carriages waiting, Baron S. pronounced a Russian wedding to be going forward. In a moment the check-string was pulled, the horses' heads turned, and we alighted at the doorway. The chapel itself was on the second story, divided off with glass doors, which we were proceeding to open much to our satisfaction, when, with all the dignity of high integrity, the officials rushed to repulse us—not, however, till we had caught a tantalizing glimpse of a fair girl with a rueful countenance standing before an altar, with candle in hand, as if about to light her own funeral pile, and a gentleman of no very promising exterior at her side. This was enough to have fired the ardour of a saint; but in our hurry, bethinking ourselves only of a terrestrial remedy, we applied that infallible key, fitted to all hearts as well as doors in Russia; looks of integrity vanished, smiles of bland acquiescence ensued, and in a moment "all the doors flew open." We entered, and mixed among the bridal party, and gradually advancing, found ourselves within a few paces of the bride, and I trust diverted her thoughts pleasantly, for the ceremony was long, and the bridegroom old enough to have been her grandfather. The ill-sorted pair stood together in the centre of the small chapel before an altar, each holding a taper as emblem of the light of their good works; and, between them and the altar, a stout burly priest, with handsome jovial countenance and fine flowing beard and hair; on either hand a subordinate. After reading prayers at some length, he gave the bridegroom a golden ring, the shining metal typifying that henceforward he should shine like the sun in his spouse's eyes; and to her one of silver, emblem of the moon, as reminding her to borrow light solely from the favour of her husband's countenance—an admonition which in this instance seemed doubly necessary.

These were exchanged amidst a profusion of bowings and crossings, the choristers, about twenty in number, dressed in the court uniform, taking up the "Ghospodi Pomilui," or "Lord have mercy on us," in strains which seemed hardly of this earth. The priest then addressed the pale girl, whom we ascertained to be an orphan, marrying for a home, in an extempore exhortation upon the duties awaiting her, with a manner so gentle and persuasive, his full Russian flowing so harmoniously from his lips, that, though not comprehending a word, my attention was riveted and my heart touched. The bridegroom, who stood without any discernible expression whatsoever on his countenance, received the same admonition in his turn; the priest, or *pope*, as they are termed in the Russian church, alternately putting on and off his high mitred cap, which with his costly robes gave him the air of a Jewish high-priest. This concluded, the sacrament, here taken with the elements mixed, was administered, which, besides the sacred meaning received in all Christian churches, on this occasion further typifies the cup of human joy and sorrow henceforth to be shared by a married couple. Of this each partook alternately three times, and then kissed the book on the altar. The attendants now brought forward two gilt crowns, which were received with reverence and many crossings by the priest, and two gentlemen in plain clothes advancing from the family party in which we had usurped a place, took the crowns, and the priest blessing the couple with their respective names of Anna Ivanovna and Peter Nicolaiwitch, placed the one on the man's head, and held the other over that of the girl, whose head-dress did not admit of a nearer approach. This latter, with her veil flowing from the back of her head, her long white garments, and pensive looks, seemed a fair statue beneath a golden canopy; while the poor man, encumbered with candle in one hand, the perpetual necessity of crossing himself with the other, and his stupendous head-gear, looked quite a ridiculous object, and, vainly attempting to bow with his body and keep his head erect, was near losing his crown several times. In this, however, lies the pith of the ceremony; so much so that the Russian word to *marry* is literally to *crown*. This pageantry continued some time, while copious portions of the Scriptures were read, holy water strewed round, and clouds of incense flung about the pair; their saints called upon to protect them; and, lastly, a solemn invocation addressed to the Almighty to bless these his children like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Joseph and Mary, &c.; to keep them like Noah in the ark, Jonas in the fish's belly, and the Hebrew captives in the fiery furnace; and, that tradition might not be omitted, to give them joy such as the Empress Helen felt on discovering the true cross. Then, taking a hand of each in his, the priest drew them, himself walking backwards, and the crown-bearers following in slow procession, three times round the altar. Now the crowns were taken off, kissed three times by bride and bridegroom, the choristers ceased, the altar disappeared, and priests and attendants, retreating backwards to the chancel end, vanished behind the screen, and all was silent in a moment.

Here you will conclude the ceremony terminated, so at least thought we, and so perhaps did the happy couple, who seemed well nigh exhausted; but now the ci-devant crown-bearers seized upon the bride, hurried her to the screen which divides off the Holy of Holies in a Russian church, where she prostrated herself three times in rapid succession before the pictures of two saints, touching the floor at each plunge audibly with her fair forehead, the exertion being so great that, but for the support of her attendants, she must have sunk. The gentleman was left to prostrate himself unassisted, which done, each kissed the picture the requisite three times. And now the bridal party advanced to congratulate—the bride's tears flowed fast—a general kissing commenced, and we sounded a rapid retreat, for in the crowd and confusion it seemed very immaterial on whom this superabundance of caresses might alight.

It is only just to say that the whole

ceremony was highly impressive, so much so as quite to overbalance the admixture of orientalisms and traditions which pervaded it. I should also add that marriage in Russia is entirely indissoluble—that no kind of relationship within the fifth degree is permitted; two sisters may not even marry two brothers; that more than three times no one can be united in wedlock, nor even that without previous fast and penance to qualify the sin; and that a priest can never marry a second time, so that a priest's wife is as much cherished as any other good thing that cannot be replaced.

We returned home, but my thoughts involuntarily followed that pale girl whose early marriage it had been our fate to witness. I longed to whisper to her words of hope that the rough-looking staff she had chosen to lean upon through life might prove a kind and a true one. But good looks are truly nothing—l'objêt qu'on aime a toujours de beaux yeux.

LETTER THE FIFTH.

Change of lodging—Corner of a dining-room—View of a Russian prison—Detention before trial—Account of the Conspiracy of 1826.

Until within a short time I had not been able to persuade myself to abandon the last few associations which threw an English colouring over my dwelling in the Galernoi Oulitza, or Rue des Galères, and yield to the kind solicitations of Baron S. and his amiable lady to remove entirely to their house. But now, as my time was fast drawing to a close, they came regularly to attack me. "It is no inconvenience in the world, we have plenty of accommodation," said the baroness, "and all at your service." "We can take no denial, we have eight rooms," said the baron, "and you shall choose which you please." And then the lady began again, and withal her very beautiful Isis-like face lighted up with such an expression of good-will and cordial kindness, that I must have been made of stone, or, what is harder still, of utter human selfishness, to have allowed the few thin ghosts of English comfort which hovered over my present dwelling to triumph over the pleadings of a lovely flesh and blood countenance like hers. If this be the type of female beauty here, Petersburg must be a paradise of charms; but the baroness is a German, and her beauty of no individual nation, unless it be of the ancient Greek.

I surrendered, therefore, a willing prisoner, and the next day was received with one of the best attributes of our fatherland, viz., an English welcome. "And now," said the baron, his pale face glowing with hospitality, "here are eight apartments; select which you please for your sleeping-room. Here are the two drawing-rooms, there the dining-room; there," pointing to the right, "is my wife's cabinet; there," pointing to the left, "is my own writing-room; further on is our bed-room; in short you have only to choose, and never was a guest more welcome." By the tardiness of my answer my kind host doubtless thought that I was inclined to be difficult in my choice; so drawing-rooms, dining-room, dressing-room, writing-room, sleeping-room, and even children's room, and I know not what beside, were duly recapitulated, and still their guest hesitated. Could they but have looked into my heart and seen the spacious vision of eight spare bed-rooms, all fitted up with English privacy, which to that moment had occupied it, my silence would have no longer puzzled them. After all I was not so new to foreign habits, but that I might have suspected the truth; so hastily considering what would be furthest from the children, furthest from the soldiers, and most to myself, I modestly selected the dining-room. Accordingly, when I entered for the night, I found an ample corner partitioned off by a screen, all my things arranged in order, and, if the chief ingredient of a good night be sound sleep, I had no reason to complain.

In his high military post Baron S. is unremittingly occupied, for business is not considered such in Russia without an incredible consumption of paper and ink, and all his spare time, when he has no guests to whom to show the lions of his capital, is spent in his little family of infant beauties.* The two youngest, twins, were brought in by

* Since writing the above Colonel and Baroness S. have experienced an affliction which has given them a mournful reputation in Petersburg; the scarlet fever, the scourge of this capital, having swept off five of their six children in four weeks' time.

their Russian wet-nurse, who, with her high velvet cap embroidered with gold, came in for her share of my traveller's privilege, and was considered with as much interest as the babes. These latter were still imprisoned in the bandages with which they continue to impede children's circulation, and keep down the population of this country. The only convenience, perhaps, consists in a facility of handling them as long as they are alive. The colonel held one upright in one hand; its little head nodding about like a fading flower on a stiff stalk—"*Après tout, c'est une barbarie,*" said he, "*mais on a fait le même avec moi ;*" and this was, perhaps, the best reason that could be given.

From this scene we removed to a very different one. This building, in which the colonel is allowed those memorable eight rooms, and which is entirely under his charge, is one of the principal military establishments in Petersburg; containing barrack-room for a standing force of twelve hundred men, and strong prisons for offenders of every kind, who are here secured and tried, and then passed on to various other governments for punishment. I accompanied the colonel to the chief prison, entering an ante-chamber where twenty soldiers kept guard before a grate of iron stanchions from floor to ceiling, and which led into a spacious apartment crowded with inmates. We entered, and the colonel uttered the military salute, "*Sdarova li ?*" "All well?" and was answered with "*Sdravie gelaiem,*" or "We wish you good health;" the equally national military answer in a simultaneous shout. Here were one hundred and four criminals, or rather prisoners, for trial, but all with crime pretty legible on their countenances. Those apprehended for murder were chained hand and foot, and at least a fifth of the number were thus fettered. All nations and tribes of Russia were congregated here, Tartars, Finns, Calmucs, Bukharians, Circassians, &c., all wretched, vitiated looking beings, many fine in feature, but hideous in expression. The most remarkable was an Arabian prince, a plunderer of the desert, fine, handsome, haughty, and hardened, a very Thug in impenitent expression, who drew up his fine figure as we passed along, and clanked his murderer's chains as proudly as if they had been the insignia of honour. It has not been at all times safe to enter this den, and the last fort-major, whose guard at the grate was neither so numerous nor so vigilant, narrowly escaped with his life. The room was long, large, and lofty, well aired, and lighted by a row of strongly-barred sash-windows: at the one end were two pumps, with brass basins beneath them for the purification of the body; and at the opposite end a Russian shrine, with ever-burning lamp, for that of the soul. Down the centre of the room was a wooden frame-work, sloping each way like the shallow roof of a house, on which their coverlets were spread for the night; and the room was clean, being washed by the prisoners once a-week. All other admissible humanity is also exercised; and that I might not tell England that the prisoners under his care were neglected, the colonel sent for a basin of soup from the prisoners' supper, and truly it was such as a more squeamish stomach might have relished.

But the great evil is, that all this is too much in the power of the commanding officer to pervert and abuse, who, being himself entirely without check or control, too often starves his prisoners to increase his own poor pay. The rank of a general, I am sorry to add, does not here pledge its owner to honesty; and it is well known and as frankly acknowledged that the *chef* of a regiment will with impunity defraud his soldiers of their allowed weight of rations, and pocket the surplus, or market them out to daily labour, of which he himself appropriates the wages. For here the individual who wears the emperor's livery is denied the pride of knowing that he is absolved from that of any other master, and every soldier who will, learns a trade, with the profits of which he endeavours to better his miserable condition. The best shoemakers, tinmen, basket-makers, &c., are soldiers. Imagine an English hotel-keeper sending to the royal bar-

racks for a soldier to hang his bells; but such I have seen done here.

Besides these promiscuous prisons there are also solitary cells in this establishment for prisoners whose cause is of a more intricate nature. None, the baron assured me, he believed to be unjustly punished; but the cruelty here consists in the length of detention before trial. Frequently a prisoner waits two years before his trial comes on. There was one in a room above us, he said, who had been detained *twelve years.* "*Mais, pauvre homme, que faire!—il a un tas de papiers haut comme cela;*" and the colonel stretched his arms to their utmost limit. Thus it appears, taking this maximum of misery, and our late minimum of inconvenience, that the paper-mills in Russia are the engines which work the greatest evils to all classes; a new species of abuse of the press! The emperor's attention is, however, particularly devoted to this subject, which, it is to be hoped, may soon be remedied, and paper and ink no longer remain the tyrants they are.

From Colonel S. I have received a most interesting account of the rebellion which greeted Nicholas's accession to the throne, on the 14th of December, 1826, an historical occurrence of which we know but little, and than which few events have left deeper traces of their existence in public mistrust and private misery. As other means have put into my hands some valuable documents relating to the same, I am enabled to give an account which I think will be interesting, and which may serve also to show the materials of which most plots are here composed.

As early as 1816, among the troops returning to Russia upon the conclusion of peace, were a few young officers—who, having become acquained with the political tendency of various secret associations in Germany, and fired with ideas, then less guilty than romantic—resolved upon establishing something similar in Russia. To these raw beginners others quickly joined themselves; and in February, 1817, the basis was laid of an association called "The Society of the Public Good." One of the chief members was a Colonel Pestel, aide-de-camp to Count Witgenstein, who, being distinguished for talent and strength of character, was intrusted with the formation of a code of rules. These, had their right or their power in any way been adapted to the end proposed, would doubtless have been of great public benefit, being principally directed towards the encouragement and maintenance of charitable institutions, to the formation of schools on the Lancasterian principle, to the better administration of justice in the courts of law (that most crying of all public abuses in Russia), and to the development of national industry and attainment of commercial prosperity. On the other hand, these benevolent statutes included the vows of a blind obedience, and the liberty of resorting to the most violent means, even "to the secret dagger and the secret cup." To the maintenance of the society each member was to subscribe the twentieth part of his income, a condition which none seemed particularly anxious to fulfil, since at no time does it appear that a sum of more than 5000 roubles, about 200*l.*, was collected, which was spent by Prince Troubetskoi, secretary to the body, but *not* for the service of the same. This association rapidly grew in strength, but with their numbers increased also their factions, and all their sittings were characterised by disorder and want of integrity.

It was not long before a false report of a design on the part of the Emperor Alexander to re-establish the kingdom of Poland, and retire with his court to Warsaw, gave rise to violent commotions, and to the first open project of regicide, and more than one member volunteered his arm for the deed. This bravado, however, frightened the more prudent or timid, and many subsequent convocations leant towards the republican form of government, to the banishment of every member of the imperial family, or to the retention of the Empress Elizabeth, Alexander's wife, alone, as head of a limited monarchy. Occasionally their thoughts were devoted to the form of constitution best adapted to their views, at one sitting

selecting England as a model, at another, Spain, and at a third, America! And having become acquainted with the existence of a powerful secret body in Poland, they mutually communicated their plans; the Society of the Public Good binding themselves to acknowledge the independence of Poland, and to restore those conquered provinces, according to their phrase, "*not yet Russified:*" whilst the Polish body promised to abet every movement of its colleague, and to withhold the Grand Duke Constantine, Viceroy of Warsaw, from returning to Russia on any outburst of the conspiracy. A further reinforcement was furnished by the discovery of another society in Russia, entitled "The United Slavonians;" thus verifying the Russian proverb, that "those who work in the dark have light enough to know their own." These combined forces, though subdivided into numerous garrisons, and scattered about the empire, were nevertheless designated in general as the Societies of the North and of the South; the former comprising Petersburg, the latter Moscow, Toulczyn, &c.; of which latter, Pestel, mentioned above, the most dangerous member because the most resolute, one whom even his companions looked on with fear as "an ambitious, designing man,"—"a Buonaparte and not a Washington," was the head. In the mean time the conspiracy included the most celebrated names, either in family or fame, in Russia; such as the Princes Troubetskoi, Obolensky, Baryatinski, Volkonski, Galitzin, &c.; the names of Narischkin, Tolstoi, Rosen, Mouravieff, four of them, Bulgarin, Bestucheff the author, &c. &c. To affirm that these were all military is useless in a country where to be a man is to be a soldier, and every means were employed to prepare for a struggle, by spreading disaffection among the soldiery, who, to do them justice, were only turned from their duty by an artful misrepresentation of the same, or by a direct fabrication of the emperor's orders: while Bestucheff, one of Russia's first writers, employed his pen in publishing seditious and exciting poems and addresses.

Proceeding thus from one extreme to another, each fresh meeting of the conspirators gave birth to wilder schemes of government, all pointing at self-aggrandisement in various shapes, while, with brutal *sang froid*, the imperial family were condemned to a general massacre; Pestel coolly counting on his fingers up to thirteen necessary murders, adding, "I will prepare the bravos to deal the blows; Baryatinski has several ready." With their bloodthirstiness, however, their disorders kept pace, almost every sitting terminating in dissensions which nullified their resolves; and thus, under God's providence, the Emperor Alexander slept safe in his bed though a traitor not seldom mounted guard at his door. For it is remarkable, that, of several who assumed the night-watch at the palace expressly for the purpose of murdering the emperor in his sleep, not one was found capable of carrying this plan into execution. From time to time, it is believed, intelligence of this plot reached him, but weary with the weight of a Russian diadem, and careless of his own life, he gave the subject no attention. In the June preceding his death, however, these reports (deserters from the cause not being wanting) assumed too responsible a shape to be neglected, and at Taganrog, whence he never returned, precautionary means were taken, which, while they did not in the least intimidate, served but to aggravate the party. The event of Alexander's death was lamented by some of the conspirators, as an opportunity for open revolt lost never to be recovered; by others, as having frustrated plans of private revenge.

In the mean time the 14th of December approached. This was the day appointed for administering the oaths of fidelity to the troops in favour of Nicholas, who acceded to the throne, not less by the wish of Alexander than by the voluntary renunciation of Constantine. This latter circumstance, however, was grasped as a pretext for disaffecting the soldiers. Although their plans were as unripe as ever they had been, or probably would have been, and but a small number of the sworn assem-

bled in Petersburg, yet a rising for that day was hastily resolved on, and Prince Troubetskoi elected as the chief. The disaffected officers ran through the ranks, urging the soldiers not to take the oath to Nicholas, alleging that the Grand Duke Constantine was in irons, the Grand Duke Michael the same; and that the former would increase the pay of all who remained faithful to him. Cries of "Constantine and the Constitution" were raised—the latter word, new to every Russian ear, and perfectly unintelligible to the simple soldiery, was explained to them as meaning Constantine's wife!—and a more biting sarcasm could not have been uttered. Arriving in this condition at the Grand Square, and beneath the windows of the Winter Palace, where the empress, with her whole court, were assembled, the revolt became apparent. Count Miloradewitch and Colonel Stürler, colonels of two regiments which refused to obey their orders, were both assassinated in cold blood by Kahowsky, one of the most brutal of the conspiracy. The Grand Duke Michael, also, narrowly escaped with life. One moment of fear or irresolution on the part of the crown had turned the day, as it has done before now in Russia; but the conspirators had mistaken their man. Nicholas stood forth in a character which he had never before had occasion to show. Firm to his rights, and dauntless in personal courage, he strengthened the bravery of the faithful, and inspired many a wavering heart with instantaneous enthusiasm for his person. The rebels fought with desperation, but their numbers were few—their chief had dastardly abandoned his post, or, rather, had never appeared at it; and after a few rounds of cannon had been discharged, this long-fermenting conspiracy, which had formed visions alternately of liberty and dominion, which had projected the restorations of kingdoms and the foundation of republics, which had promised provinces and places, and had anticipated bringing the proud Nicholas to conditions, if not to utter submission, was quelled before night, with nothing remaining but mistrust in the bosom of the sovereign, and disgrace upon half the noble families in the empire. Now began the painful task of investigation. Every day brought forth fresh convictions, and proofs strong as daylight branded many as guilty, of whom the merest suspicion would have been deemed calumny. But no means had been neglected to secure adherents. Wives had misled their husbands, brothers their brethren.

The commission seems to have been conducted with great justice and indulgence; and contrary to the usual custom of Russia, who, not content with cutting off the head of the hydra, generally sears all remembrance also with the utmost care, a summary of its proceedings was published. In all, one hundred and twenty-three were adjudged worthy of punishment. These were divided into twelve categories, of whom the first, five in number, including Pestel and Kahowsky, were hanged; the second degraded and banished for life to Siberia, with hard work in the mines; others degraded, with a certain portion of hard labour and exile in proportion to their guilt; whilst the twelfth class were sentenced to serve as common soldiers, with power of promotion. Most of their wives and families followed the exiled; and it is reported that the colony of nobility which this rebellion transplanted to Siberia are living there in great comfort, their labour being little more than nominal; subscribing among themselves for all the periodicals, newspapers, and new works, which appear in the European world, and piquing themselves on the exclusive aristocracy of their circle. But this had better not be looked closer into, or, much as the guilty are to be compassionated, our ideas of right and wrong would be rather shocked at an evasion in execution of sentence, which proceeds neither from the repentance of the subject, nor the clemency of the monarch. With respect to the latter, however, many of the sentences have been mitigated, and some are already returned to their homes, bearing, nevertheless, the badge of the past in their coarse privates' uniform and other degrading restrictions.

It is worthy of note that an Englishman, or one English-descended, of the

name of Sherwood, was the individual who more especially betrayed the conspiracy to Alexander, though unfortunately from no motive beyond revenge, having been degraded in the army for some misdemeanour. He afterwards received a pension, and the unmerited name of Sherwood *vernoi*, or Sherwood the Faithful.

My kind friend, Baron S., owes his elevation to that day; the murdered Colonel Stürler was his brother-in-law, and he himself is indebted for his life to the intervention of a friend's arm.

LETTER THE SIXTH.

Detention in Petersburg—The Petersburg malady—Preparations for Northern travel—Journey to Narva—Troubles there—Entrance into Estonia—Intense cold—Wolves—The station-house Loop—Arrival in Reval.

Der mensch denkt, und Gott lenkt; l'homme propose, et Dieu dispose. The third week in October had been fixed for me to quit Petersburg, and November was far advanced ere I eventually turned my back on it. I had closed my volume of sight-seeing; I had quitted my tent in the corner of that friendly dining-room; and had returned to the English boarding-house in order to start by the last pyroskaff for Reval, when I suddenly fell under that penalty—a kind of invisible douane in the air—to which all southern-born sojourners in Petersburg sooner or later must submit. For it is a disagreeable fact, that no foreigner becomes seasoned to the exhalations of this swamp-based capital, without paying entrance-fee in the shape of an attack of fever more or less acute. Some impeach the air, others the Neva, others the food; but in my own case I am inclined to ascribe it to a too careless defence against the cold, already piercingly severe, and which disguised beneath the rays of a bright and steady sun takes a novice to the climate completely unawares. May every lonely traveller be half as well tended, for the kindest of English Samaritans and the best of English physicians were around me, and, ere I forget either, "may my right hand forget its cunning." In a few days I experienced no further inconvenience than that attending an active mind and a passive body, for "strength leaves us in pounds, but returns in drachms," and an unfeigned contrition for being so little mindful of the blessings of health while undisputedly mine. Meanwhile it had become no easy matter to reach Reval, my destination, for the last pyroskaff had ceased; diligences never had existed: the bad season, when autumn's last wind and rain touch the confines of the winter's first snow,—what, in other words, is here termed "the little winter,"—had commenced; and a journey of three hundred miles, through a strange country and strange language, wore a discouraging aspect. But faint hearts must stay at home. In a short time a Russian man-servant, trusty and responsible, though no Artellschik, was found willing to escort a lady to Reval who could only sit still in the carriage, and not so much as speak for herself. So he was brought up for my approbation, and proved to be a brisk-looking, moustached little fellow, who, knowing no language beyond his own, gazed on me as I sat propped in my fauteuil, with an air of compassion, as if to say, "I'll take care of you, poor thing!" and was very eloquent to everybody else.

And now, by the advice of the experienced, our measures were hastened; for a frost had set in, which promised to carry away all floating bridges 'twixt Petersburg and Reval; after which a period ensues when travelling ceases, and even the islands forego all communication with the main body of Petersburg for at least a fortnight.

What is there about this capital which renders it so unloveable as a residence? I had experienced within its walls kindness as much beyond my expectations as my deserts—not only courtesy and hospitality, but real genuine Christian goodness, and I turned away with a feeling of thankfulness that my life was not destined to be spent there. It seems as if the soil, revenging itself for having been taken

by force, and appropriated to a purpose Nature never intended, inspires a sense of dreariness and loneliness which can hardly be rationally accounted for. I never read or heard of the English traveller, sojourning beyond a few days, who did not quit Petersburg with a sentiment of release from bondage; and many a Russian, long resident abroad, whose darling vision by day and night it has been to retire to his native capital with the fruits of his expatriation, has, upon experiment, owned the disappointment, and ended his days elsewhere. "Je déteste Petersbourg" is the thankless sentence you hear from every mouth.

Our journey commenced at six in the afternoon of the 19th of November, a delay until daybreak being deemed highly hazardous. Anton on the box, and myself, loaded with as many clothes as a southlander would wear up in the course of a long life, nestled down comfortably in the calèche with as little inclination as power to stir. My light English straw hat had been banished by unanimous consent, and a close, silk, wadded cap, edged with fur, substituted. My English-lined fur-cloaks had been held up to derision as mere cobwebs against the cold, and a fox-fur, the hair long as my finger, drawn over them. All my wardrobe had been doubled and trebled, and even then my friends shook their heads and feared I was too thinly clad. Thus we sallied forth into the wild waste of darkness and snow, in which Petersburg lay, travelling with four post-horses but slowly through the unsound snowed-up roads, which were, nevertheless, not in the condition to admit of a sledge. Near midnight I alighted at the second post-house from Petersburg, the stages being on the average twenty-five wersts long, with four wersts to three miles. It was a fine building outwardly, but otherwise a mere whitened sepulchre. Here the superintendent of the post-stables, not being able to settle matters with Anton to mutual satisfaction, obtruded his fine person into my apartment, and bowing gracefully, and with many a commanding gesture, poured forth a torrent of words of the utmost melody and expression. He was a perfect patriarch: his fresh sheepskin caftan and rich flowing beard curling round a head of the loftiest Vandyke character, unbaring, as he spoke, a set of even, gleaming teeth, and lighted to advantage by a flaring lamp which hung above. I was in no hurry to interrupt him. Finding his eloquence not to the purpose he wanted, he left me with fresh gestures of the grandest courtesy to attack my obdurate servant, who loved *copecks* better than he did the picturesque.

Re-seated with fresh horses and lulled by the musical jingle of our post-bells, I dozed with tolerable comfort during the night, and opened my eyes with daybreak to a perfect Esquimaux landscape,—boundless flats of snow, low hovels of wood, and peasants gliding noiselessly past on their tiny sledges. At twelve we reached Jamburg, an empty, rambling town of large crown barrack buildings and miserable little houses, with here and there a bright Quentin Matsys-looking head, peeping at the equipage through the dull double glass. Here all restless doubts relative to the existence of a bridge were to terminate, and, in a fever of anxiety. I descended a hill which led to the river Luga. There it lay before me, broad, rapid, and dark; great masses of loose ice sulkily jostling each other down its current, but bridge—none at all. My heart sunk. Jamburg was but little inviting for a fortnight's residence, when, upon inquiry, a ferry was found to be plying with greater difficulty and greater risk at every transport, and this would have ceased in a few hours. Peasants with their carts and cattle stood on the bank awaiting their turn, and after much delay and a profuse exchange of *tchorts*, literally, devil, in which these Russians are most liberal, and which seems destined to be the first word I retain, our promiscuous-laden ferry-boat ground slowly through the stiffening ice, and at length touched the opposite shore. Here, having abandoned our old horses on the other side, Anton went off to search for fresh ones, and I was left sitting in the carriage for above an hour, among a set of

swearing, merry beings, who seemed bent alternately on quarrelling and laughing. The banks of the Luga are very pretty, though desolate; high rocks, with a scanty vegetation creeping among them. When fresh horses arrived, their first task was to drag us up a hill of unusual steepness, whence, as far as Narva, was one uninterrupted plain. In Narva, which I reached about five o'clock, after a little difficulty we found the house to which I had been recommended by a friend, a rambling edifice of unpainted wood, all on the ground floor. I entered a suite of rooms, and caught sight of various female shapes receding before me in the same proportion as I advanced, until, having gained the apartment conventionally dedicated to the ceremony of reception, they all faced about, and came bowing and curtseying forward to receive me.

Let me be exonerated from the charge of ingratitude in what I am about to say; but in the house where I now received the outward rites of hospitality, the curiosity excited by the novelty of an English guest, the vanity of showing off an English lion, was so far paramount to every other consideration, that ere I quitted it, my debt of obligation had been pretty well cancelled. I was ill,—tired,—a stranger,—but it mattered not; my advent in this little *Krähwinkel* was too great a wonder to be neglected. Before I had been there an hour visitors crowded in to see me: and first an old lady catechised me, and then a vulgar officer, who from the abundance of his mouth bombarded the store and floor around, instructed me; imparting between every fresh volley various items of information relative to English customs and manners; our Queen's beauty, matrimonial intentions, &c., in all of which he was so perfectly satisfied with his own authority, that I ventured no expostulation. All this time my hostess was in a flutter of importance, and, whenever my answers appeared deficient, filled them up so readily, that I found I could safely leave the task of my biography in her hands. She subtracted some years from my age; she added some thousands of roubles to my rental, placing me, with a delicacy worthy a better occasion, in this respect on a par with the grandees of her own land; and then, with a sigh, she ejaculated, "Poor young creature! so ill too!" "The dysentery," exclaimed three voices; "No, typhus fever," said a fourth; "All the English have it when they travel," cried a fifth; and so on, till I had full occupation in listening. All this would have been very amusing at another time, but I longed for quiet, and had a buzz of voices and glare of lights around me; I longed for rest, and was planted upright in a hard chair, which was exactly convex where it ought to have been concave. I looked back on my quiet carriage with affectionate regret, and wished myself seated in it, and continuing my journey.

Having, with the assistance of my watch and my very slender Slavonic vocabulary, contrived to make Anton understand that we were to start at eight the next morning, and having now borne this examination and exhortation for several hours, I began to consider how I should best sound a retreat from the circle of my spectators, I cannot say audience. At the first indication the whole rose in arms. They had not half enjoyed my company. Besides, supper was coming in, and forthwith my hostess enumerated one greasy dish after another, with various amalgamations of reputed English origin. May I be forgiven for inwardly shuddering as I thought of my late diet of sago and rice-pudding. And now, being thus far, though it was evident my conduct was the most flagrant breach of Narva decorum ever known, I persisted, being hardly able to stand, on retiring to rest, and at last broke through the ring. The next morning, by half-past eight no carriage was visible: nine o'clock, half-past nine came, and still Anton appeared not; and now I elucidated that, in the hopes of my being induced to meet another select circle that evening, my hostess had remanded my carriage *sine die*. Good woman! how little she guessed my thoughts. I thanked her

in my heart for having taught me to prefer on a future occasion the meanest tavern, where rest and privacy could be commanded, to the equivocal hospitality of a friend's friend; but nothing should have induced me to stay an hour under her roof longer than was necessary. Curiosity and indelicacy may be terms differing in different countries, but there were a few objections, I need not specify here, which are much the same everywhere. By eleven o'clock I left Narva, and, for the first half-werst, Anton, turning round on his seat, was very voluble in self-vindication, in which I could catch the words *stara barina*, or old lady, in deprecatory tones at every third word; and having thus eased his conscience resumed silence.

We had now entered Estonia; the landscape was undulating and wooded, and towards evening a high line of ocean-horizon and a faint sound of waves showed me we were skirting a cliff of considerable eminence. The appearance of our horses also kept pace with the improved condition of the country. They were beautiful sleek animals, small and graceful, sometimes four cream colours, sometimes four blacks, who started with fire, never abated their speed, and pawed the ground with impatience, when the five-and-twenty wersts were run. How they were harnessed, or how the animals contrived to keep their places in the shifting tag and rag which danced about them, was quite an enigma. No less so the manœuvre, more puzzling than any conjuror's trick of my childhood, by which a little urchin, by one strong pull at a ragged rope, disengaged all four horses at once. Meanwhile the basket of provisions, which kind friends had filled for me at Petersburg, rose to my imagination in most tempting colours; and about three o'clock I alighted at a station-house of no very promising exterior. Anton peeped into a room on the right, and shook his head; into one on the left, and repeated the gesture; each was filled with smoke from a party of noisy carousers. The host coming forward, I asked—for here German was a passport—for an "*ordentliches Zimmer*," a decent room, in which I could dine; when, looking round at his filthy floors, rickety chairs, and smoking guests, he answered, with a shrug, "*Was können sie mehr verlangen?*" "What can you wish for more?" I very nearly laughed in his face; but the occupants, with more tact, observing that I should prefer solitude, all adjourned to the other room.

The next stage we completed by six o'clock, when I found good tea and a pretty woman, who, presuming on her good looks, began to catechise me, after the Narva fashion, upon my comings and goings. She also informed me that his imperial majesty, on one of his self-imposed forced marches, had passed through but a few weeks back on a common *Telega*, or ost-cart, and had slept two hours on the sofa where I was now stretched. The stage following this included a stream, generally fordable, but now impassable. To secure, therefore, the aid of a stone-bridge, we had to make a detour over wretched roads, which lengthened the way to thirty-seven wersts. It was midnight ere this was completed; and eager to proceed, and loathing the post-houses, —for the traveller through these regions must be placed, if not above the standard of humanity, certainly below those of our native land,—I incautiously began another stage. The atmosphere now began to sharpen, and, from being very cold, became still and intense. A thick fog also filled the air; and Anton, nestling his head into the depths of his furs, sat before me like a pillar of salt. I felt my warmth gradually ebbing away, my breath congealed on my face, eyelashes and eyebrows hung in fringes of icicles, and a tell-tale tear of anxiety froze on my cheek. How severely did I reproach myself for having proceeded and exposed horses and men to such inclemency! Meanwhile we were traversing an open plain skirted by forests, and from time to time the silence of the night was broken by a moaning, snarling, drawn-out cry, which fell dismally on the ear. I listened in vain conjecture, when a piercing whine within one hundred yards of us made me lean for-

ward, and Anton, remarking the movement, composedly articulated "*Volki*," wolves. Had the word been less similar, I believe I should have sprung to the conclusion; and chilling still colder at these evidences of a savage neighbourhood, of which we seemed the only human occupants, I longed more impatiently than ever for the friendly dwellings of man. At length we reached the station-house, and, grown less dainty, I entered instantly, and stumbled over a peasant on the floor, who rising, stupid with sleep, drew a green, long-wicked candle out of its filthy socket, and thrust it thus into my hand; and then, passing on through a room where lay two military men stretched on leather benches, and another shapeless mass on the floor, as unconcernedly as if they had been so many slumbering infants, I penetrated, under Anton's guidance, to an untenanted room beyond. Here my brisk attendant, who seemed most tenderly solicitous for my comfort, warmed my carriage-cushions at the stove, and then disposing them as he deemed most temptingly on the wretched sofa, left me literally to repose: for, oppressed with cold and fatigue of mind and body, sleep fell instantly on me.

And now that the weary body lay like a senseless log, reckless of the two thousand miles which separated it from the place of its birth, the soul bounded free over space and time; and before me was an open doorway, and within it, gazing earnestly upon me, stood the form of one long lost; and grasping forward to seize the well-known hand, my own fell on the damp wrappers in which I lay; while a faint prismatic hue on the eastern horizon, struggling through the dull double panes, outshone the failing taper at my side. After that face 'twas vain to think of sleep. My watch told me that two hours were missing during those few minutes that I seemed to rest, and, scattering sparks behind me, I went to search for Anton. In the neighbouring chamber of drowsiness all was much as I left it, save that the shapeless mass had reared itself aloft, and now stood, a giant figure, leaning fast asleep against the stove. I stood in the midst, and held my slender taper aloft, searching with peering eyes, through this hall of Circe, for the figure of Anton. At the further end a door seemed to lead to utter darkness. I bowed my head as I passed through the low portal into a little den, where lay a figure beneath a coverlet. Hardened by circumstances, I pulled the covering from the sleeper's face, and held my light to his eyes; but a different pair than Anton's opened on me, and, hoping to pass for a vision, I rapidly retreated, and was retiring in despair to my own haunt, when he emerged from the opposite side.

And again our bells jingled more cheerily to daylight and renovated spirits. The fog vanished, the sun rose cloudless, and groves of birch-trees drooped gracefully beneath thin veils of glistening hoar-frost hanging like fairies in tissue robes among them,—

> "While every shrub, and every blade of grass,
> And every pointed thorn, seemed wrought in glass."

We were now within ninety wersts of Reval, and thoughts and conjectures rose unbidden, and sweet visions of affection, cloudless as that sun, and with them affection's inseparable shadow—fear. For the day at length had dawned, for years so wistfully anticipated—the day that had been looked to through change and through sorrow—how would it terminate? Now that hope was yielding to certainty, suspense seemed more intolerable than ever. In vain philosophy and reason interfered to silence needless fear; they were dismissed to comfort themselves with their own elements, and the heart persisted in fluttering on its own way.

Our next station-house looked more tempting than any we had passed: two old elms, Baucis and Philemon-like, stood at the door; the windows were bright and clear, the floor clean and fresh sanded, and in the corner stood a dear familiar object, a regular eight-day clock—"Thomas Hunter, Fenchurch-street." I could have worshipped it. The mystery was cleared by a few words of broken English, which fell hesitatingly from the lips of a burly, blushing host. He had spent

some months in England twenty years before, and, had he denied the fact, his habits would have borne witness to it: for the table was neatly spread, water and towels placed; and his face glowed a brighter red when I told him his little house was as comfortable as an English one. White bread there certainly was none. So Anton thawed my stiff Petersburg loaves, and mine host toasted them in the English fashion. The name of this station was *Loop*.

Once more I resumed my position, which, probably from the lassitude still hanging about me, was rather refreshing than wearisome, and we plunged into a forest-road, the trees, chiefly Scotch firs, sometimes brushing the vehicle, sometimes opening into irregular glades white with snow, which lasted for miles and tens of miles. The werst-posts were now watched with progressing eagerness, and now they told fifty wersts from Reval, and soon twenty-five. Here was again a short stop, and, holding up the bottle, Anton showed me the sherry frozen through. What a night that had been! According to my host's information at Loop, eighteen degrees of cold, Réaumur.* The country was now one monotonous plain of snow, broken only by the black and white werst-posts, and by heaps of stones placed at distances to indicate the line of road. And evening gathered quickly round us, but still my eyes refused to rest, and soon they spied a high line of distant ocean; and then, dim and indistinct, appeared spires and towers, their utmost points tipped with the last reflection of the departing sun. This was Reval. I felt my eyes fill and my face glow. What would I not have given for a friend—a servant—a child—a dunce—the meanest creature breathing—to whom I could have uttered the words that seemed to choke me! But a snow-storm swept the vision away, and all was gloomy darkness. We now descended a steep hill, and scattered houses lay thick along the road, and I sat leaning forward, and watching like one who, returned to his native home, seeks some well-known token at every turn. But what or who had I in this strange land but one object, herself a home, who deemed not of the fevered heart that was hurrying to meet hers?

We crossed a drawbridge; we passed through guard-house and soldiers; we traversed one narrow dark street after another, and then the horses rushed up a steep hill between two high walls, and stopped before a house in the square above. In a moment I was upstairs, a door opened, and between me and the light behind stood a slight figure.

Need I to tell the failing heart and paralysed limbs with which we stand on the threshold of that moment which hope has fed on and fond fancy rehearsed for years and years ere it arrives? or need I to tell the blissful agony of that meeting—joy too much for the poor heart to hold—the dearly-earned fruits of cruel separation—the life remembered in a moment—the moment remembered for life? Yet who would wish to pay the heavy penalty—to fast for years for one delicious draught? How good it is that our fates are not in our own guidance—that the lot is cast into the lap, but the ordering thereof not dependent on us!

That night the weary traveller slept safe from the world's harms beneath a sister's roof, and, waking the next morning, "found the vision true."

* About eleven degrees below zero, Fahrenheit.

LETTER THE SEVENTH.

Unlocking hearts and unpacking trunks—Domiciliation in a new land—Removal into the country—Splendour of residence—Every-day routine—Cuisine—Schafferei—Duties of Estonian ladies—The volkstube—Spinning and weaving departments—A bride's dowry—Mode of heating houses—Farming buildings—Greenhouses.

How much two people have to talk about between whom no reserve exists, and who first unlock the accumulated hoards of long years of separation! It might naturally be imagined they would begin with those subjects nearest their parting, and thus come downwards; but no, they invariably commence with those nearest their meeting, and so work upwards. For memory allows of no short cut by which to slip round to that sanctum you are seeking, but compels those who wander through her regions to pursue a retrograding motion, to open one cell after another as they offer themselves in succession, till that one is reached where the memory of another joins on with yours. And in the case of two individuals long sundered there is a double reason for this process, for, both equally changed by time, were they at once to leap to the spot whence each took a different route, they would hardly recognise one another.

And then there are all the treasures of luggage to examine—those troublesome accompaniments of humanity which ought to yield a double harvest of pleasure now, for they have caused anxiety and detention enough upon the road. In the first fever of curiosity and communicativeness, therefore, the floor is strewed with boxes and trunks—all opened, but none emptied; while little meddlesome fairies—those terribly irrefutable evidences of the lapse of years—dive their tiny fingers into every recess, and one little shrill voice exclaims, "*Was ist diess?*" and another, "*Was ist das?*" till the owner has to give a catalogue raisonné of her goods, and they, in their enviable simplicity, generally admire that which is least worth having.

But now, if we would avoid a second custom-house conglomeration, we must shut the door on these little well-known strangers—on these small unread editions of a dear and familiar type—and consign the task of putting to rights, evening out, and folding up, to two mild-looking Estonian maids, with high helmet-shaped caps, short waists, and striped petticoats, who smile and nod as they pass to and fro with light steps, and occasionally exchange some low remark of admiration on the treasures of an English wardrobe.

What a world of boundless novelty opens on the individual who finds himself suddenly thrown into the innermost home life of an hitherto strange people! In general the traveller is left, and most justly so, to wear his way gradually into the privacy of other nations, and by the time he has attained some knowledge of their habits, has somewhat blunted the edge of his own. This is the most natural course, and also the fairest, otherwise the same individual who is at once thrust into the lights and shadows of one country, ere the retina of his understanding has lost the images of another, and who, in many instances, is placed in situations in the new home, which he never tried in the old, runs the risk of being very open-eyed to other people's foibles and prejudices, and most comfortably blind to his own. We are such creatures of habit that it is difficult to judge of the inner system of a foreign land otherwise than too severely, till after several months of observation, nor otherwise than too

favourably after as many years. But the reverse is applicable to the hasty traveller whose time and opportunity enable him only to view the outer shell —to scan that which all who run can read. His perceptive powers can hardly be too fresh, nor his judgment too crude, upon those things whose existence lies but in the novelty of his impressions. Like *soufflets*, they must be served hot, and eaten hastily, to be rightly tasted. The breath of cool reason would ruin them. Being, however, much in the same situation as the traveller first supposed, and under the same risk of mental purblindness, the delay of a few weeks, which intervenes since my last letter, must be considered as only justice to both parties.

A few days after my arrival we removed into the country, a day's journey through a richly-wooded landscape, and arrived in the evening before a grand crescent-shaped building, recalling in size and form the many-tenemented terraces of Regent's Park. If the exterior promised fair, the interior far surpassed all expectation, and I have only to shut my eyes to a certain roughness and want of finish to fancy myself in a regal residence. The richness of the architectural ornaments—the beauty of the frescoes and painted ceilings—the polish of the many-coloured and marble-like parquets—the height, size, and proportion of the apartments, produce a tout ensemble of the utmost splendour, entirely independent of the aid of furniture, which here, like the Narva chairs, seems to have been constructed before comfort was admitted to form an ingredient in human happiness.

It is a strange assimilation, this splendid case built over the simplest, most primitive customs. The family have no fixed hour for rising, and sometimes you find only your host's empty coffee-cup, whilst he is abroad or busy writing ere you have risen; or you meet a servant bearing his slender breakfast to him in bed, and long after you are settled to the occupation of the day, you see him emerging from his dormitory in his dressing-gown and with a most sleepy face. Breakfast is here not considered a meal, and not half the respect paid to it which the simplest lunch-tray would command with us: some take it standing, others smoking, and the children as often as not run off with their portion of *butterbrod* to devour it in comfort in some little niche, or upon the base of a pillar in the magnificent salle; or facilitate the act of mastication by a continual wandering from place to place, which upon English carpets would be considered nothing less than petty treason. Then at one o'clock we all pass through the suite of rooms to a dining-room spacious and splendid enough for Crockford's club-house, where an excellent, plentiful, and formal repast is served, generally preceded by what they call here *Frühstück*, or breakfast (the real breakfast, according to the acceptation of the term, being simply denominated *café*), which is not treated as a midway morsel to silence the voice of appetite, but looked upon as a herald, the dinner being in full view, to summon and encourage all the powers of relish and enjoyment. Accordingly it consists of highly-spiced or salted dishes — of strong Swiss cheese, pickled fish, black pudding, sausages—washed down with a glass of potent liqueur, which the elder ladies seem to enjoy quite as much as the gentlemen. The cuisine is German, upon a foundation of native dishes, one of which especially no foreigner can pass a Wednesday or a Saturday in this country without tasting: for, by old-established custom, on these two days a kind of pudding made of oatmeal, and called *Brei*, regularly recurs in lieu of soup; being handed round by one servant, while another follows with an ample jug of the richest cream, which you pour over your smoking hot brei without any reserve. Cream enters into a number of dishes, and is used with a liberality which, except in the cases of its being eaten sour, covers in my view a multitude of culinary sins. Another peculiarity of daily occurrence is the rye bread, here slightly fermented for the table of the family, and most powerfully so for that of the attendants, and which a palate requires the initiation of a few weeks

ere it can relish. White bread is here considered as a delicacy little inferior to cake, being made of the finest Moscow flour, easily recognisable by its dryness and insipidity, while the term *brod* is conventionally restricted exclusively to the long chocolate-coloured rye loaves; and several dear little blonde wiseheads were infinitely amused at the ignorance of the English visitor, who at dinner called for *Schwarzbrod*, black-bread. The mode of waiting is the same as in Germany—the dishes are carved at the sideboard, and carried round—a plan which sometimes occasions great mortification, for by the time the solitary lump of meat has been laboured through, swallowed past redemption, and your plate removed, exactly that vegetable succeeds which would have given it the requisite relish. It is much the fashion in England to malign our old custom of carving at table, and advocate this foreign plan; but whatever trouble this mode may save the lady of the house, or the gentleman on her right, it affords no advantage to the guest, who here, while the servants are going their weary rounds with a file of dishes, and detained for minutes by some absent individual, or dainty child, may pine in vain for a piece of bread or glass of water. Tea at six is a slight meal, the beverage itself being of the finest description; but supper is a solemn repast of several courses, when so much is eaten that it is no wonder but little appetite survives for breakfast.

Servants of both sexes swarm here as numerously as in a house of the same rank in England—the one, it is true, with rusty coat and unblacked boots, but the other neat and tidy, generally still in her village costume, if unmarried her hair braided simply and picturesquely round her head, who goes sliding over the parquet floors, and, such is the inconvenience of these thoroughfare houses, has no other passage from her working room to the kitchen than through the whole splendid suite of drawing-rooms. Here, as in all countries in an early stage of civilisation, the women labour twice as willingly and effectually as the men. As household servants they become trustworthy and active, work with their needle, wash, and dress hair superiorly well; while the Estonian ladies require so much attendance, and accustom their servants to consider them as so helpless, that it has cost me a severe dumb struggle with an officious lady's-maid to assert the independence of my own habits.

After taking a review of the dwelling-rooms and bed-rooms, all spacious and airy, and wanting nought save that most desirable of all bed-room requisites, privacy, my hostess led the way to her *schafferei*, or store-room, and, unlocking the door with a slight solemnity of manner, ushered me into a crowded treasury of household goods. The room was a very warehouse, hung round, fitted up, and strewed about with the numerous items of a housekeeper's economy, to which those who only consume them often attach too little importance, and those who have to provide them too much. Side by side on the floor stood big-bodied bottles of spirit and liqueur, rolls of coarse linen, jars of pickles and preserves, hanks of wool, loaves of sugar, and bundles of flax. In deep chests around were the Moscow flour, salt, sago, saffron, starch, &c. &c.; while tiers of drawers displayed large provisions of native dried apples, pears, cherries, peas, beans, birch-twigs, applied as a decoction for wounds—in short a perfect Hortus siccus for kitchen use. Around hung balls of twine and yarn, nets, corks, candles of as many colours and sizes as those offered to the Virgin of Casan, tanned sheep-skins both black and white, and numberless other pendent treasures; while one side was fitted up in numerous partitions, where the raisins, figs, and spices for daintier palates were stored. This schafferei is the particular sanctuary of the lady of the house, who, if she do all, has enough business to transact. For the duties of an Estonian *wirthschaft*, or *ménage*, are not confined to ordering dinner, or scolding servants, but, like those of our grandmothers a few generations back, who directed the weighty concerns of a large country residence, include the

weaving of linen, the making of candles, the boiling of soap, brewing of liqueurs, &c.; and communication with distant towns being necessarily seldom, it requires no small forethought to provide that during the long months of winter the family shall never fail in sugar or plums, nor the many hangers-on in the back settlements of the house in the more stable articles of subsistence. It is true every lady has her housekeeper to advertise her that there is no more home-brewed vinegar in the bottle, or home-made starch in the tub, or, if she be unusually wealthy, an extra assistant, emphatically styled a *Mamselle*, on whom all these base cares descend; but housekeepers and mamselles will be human as well as their mistresses, and sometimes all three unite in forgetting some important trifle which equally spoils the dinner and the temper of the *Hausherr* for several days.

All these grave responsibilities render the post of a baron's lady one, however honourable, but of little repose. The very word *wirthschaft* possesses a talismanic power. By growing girls, who trust ere long to superintend one of their own, it is pronounced with a mixture of reverence and apprehension; by young brides, fresh in office, with a sententious consequence, as the password of their newly-acquired dignity; and by older versed matrons with a glee and evident inward gratulation which makes me suspect they are very glad of so convenient and comprehensive a word to absolve them from all other duties. In its various mysteries and details, however, there is much that is both interesting and instructive; and a clear-headed practical woman, with a solid education, will, by generalising one department, dispensing with another, and making use of her own sense in intricate cases, strip the term of half its terrors. Education has not hitherto been considered a necessary portion of an Estonian lady's dowry, and in old times it was thought the greater the simpleton the better the housekeeper; but the progress of enlightenment, and a few solitary intermarriages with women from more advanced countries, have aroused the first suspicion of a fact, not perhaps sufficiently acknowledged anywhere, that educated persons excel in the meanest things, and that refined minds possess the most common sense.

After again consigning this eclectic magazine to its safe solitude, we continued our walk to the housekeeper's rooms, very comfortable and warm, with three little children and half a dozen chickens sharing the brick floor; to the kitchen, where the men-cooks were in active preparation round their flat stoves; and then on to the *Volkstube*, or people's room, where all the lower servants, the coachmen and grooms (here not included as house-servants), the cow-girls and the sheep-boys, &c., all come in for their meals at stated times, and muster between twenty and thirty daily. This was a room for an artist; a black earthen floor, walls toned down to every variety of dingy reds, blacks, and yellows, with a huge bulwark of a stove of a good terra cotta colour, and earthen vessels, and wooden tubs and benches; and, in short, every implement of old-fashioned unwieldiness and picturesque form. But the chief attractions were the inmates; for, hard at work, plying their spinning-wheels, sat, either singly or in groups, about fifteen peasant-girls, their many-striped petticoats, and dull blue or grey cloth jackets, their tanned locks falling over their shoulders, and deep embrowned spinning-wheels, telling well against the warm tones around them. In some the hair was so light a hue as exactly to repeat the colour of the flax upon their spindles; and these, the housekeeper informed us in broken German, were the surest of husbands, —flaxen hair being a feature that the hearts of the peasants are never known to resist. Most of these picturesque damsels were barefooted; and one pretty yellow-haired lassie, observing that she was particularly an object of attention, let her hair fall like a veil over her stooping face, and peeped archly at us from between the waving strands. I can't say that any of these young ladies looked particularly clean or inviting, but every vice has its plea-

sant side, and the worst of dirt and filth is, they are so picturesque. Some of them rose on being addressed, and, stooping low, coaxed us down with both hands, much as if they were trying to smooth down our dresses. This is the national salutation to their superiors, especially if there be a request to make. Further on stood a stout kitchen-girl, her jacket thrown off, and only her shift over her shoulders, kneading in a deep trough with a strong wooden bat the coarse bread which is called by distinction the *Volksbrod*, or people's bread. The spinning-girls belong to the estate, and attend at the *hof*, or court, as the seigneur's house is termed, for so many weeks in the winter to spin under the housekeeper's superintendence; nor do they appear very averse to this labour, for, besides the smart grooms and soft shepherds who assort with them at meal-times, this volkstube is the resort of every beggar and wandering pedlar, and the universal tattle-shop of the neighbourhood.

The further branches of this spinning department are among the most interesting of a lady's wirthschaft. The commoner linen is woven in the cottages of the peasantry; but the more fanciful and delicate manufactures, the diaper for towels, the damask for table-linen, devolve to a regular weaver, of which each estate maintains one or more, and who sends in his book of patterns for the lady to select grounds, centres, and borders, according to her taste. If she possess this quality in a higher degree, she may further diversify the work by sketching some flower or arabesque, which the weaver imitates with much ingenuity. And no first view of any particular article of furniture made expressly to our design, no inspection of new drawing-room curtains of which we have chosen the material, lining, binding, and fringe, can afford greater eagerness and interest than the first unrolling of the bundles of shining, unbleached diaper, or damask linen, as they come from these private looms. In Estonia, as in Germany, custom requires that a bride should not only bring to her ardent lover that inestimable treasure—herself—but also set off the gift to greater advantage by waggon-loads of household furniture, sideboards of plate and glass, and chests of linen. A careful parent, therefore, who concludes that her daughter is born in order one time or other to fulfil Nature's great law, cannot well begin to amass too early; and ere the infant be fairly out of its long clothes, the first foundation of the dozen-dozens of sheets and table-linen, which are to give her additional grace in the eyes of her lord, is laid. In former days this was carried to a much greater extent, and a happy house full of daughters groaned with the growing treasures of their *Austeuer*, or dowry; but of late a wakening perception, an economical suspicion of the expedience of not laying by "treasures which rust and moth can corrupt, or thieves break through and steal," as well as an increasing demand for money, and, what is a more pertinent argument than all, the plentiful remnants of grandmothers', and even great-grandmothers', wardrobes, has somewhat corrected the ardour for accumulation.

Within these great houses not a breath of cold is experienced. The rooms are heated by stoves frequently ornamental rather than otherwise; being built in tower-like shapes, story over story of pure white porcelain, in various graceful architectural mouldings; sometimes surmounted with classic figures of great beauty, and opening with brass doors, kept as bright as if they were of gold. In houses of less display, these stoves are merely a projection in the wall, coloured and corniced in the same style as the apartment. In adjoining rooms they are generally placed back to back, so that the same fire suffices for both. These are heated but once in the twenty-four hours, by an old Caliban, whose business during the winter it is to do little else. Each stove will hold a heavy armful of billet, which blazes, snaps, and cracks most merrily; and when the ashes have been carefully turned and raked with what is termed an *Ofen Gabel*, or stove-fork, so that no unburnt morsel remains, the chimney aperture is closed over the glowing embers, the brass doors firmly shut,

and in about six hours after this the stove is at the hottest—indeed, it never cools. Great precaution is necessary in preventing a too hasty closing of the chimney, for if the smallest piece of uncalcined wood be overlooked, the foul effect of charcoal air is instantly perceived. On this account the stoves are generally lighted in the morning, so that all possibility of carelessness may be obviated ere night; for it is quite impossible to enforce the necessary caution upon the ignorant servants. What can a few ends of blazing wood signify? they fancy: so down goes the chimney, and swing go the brass doors; but within a quarter of an hour the unconscious individual who remains in the room feels a sickening, black headache stealing over him, and if he be a novice to the sensation, begins to impeach, one after another, all the foreign messes of which he has been partaking, as containing properties uncongenial to his powers of digestion, and little suspects that the insidious enemy is around and about him, mingling with the very breath of life. The only remedy is immediately to open door and chimney aperture, which draws the foul air quickly out of the room. Among the servants and lower orders, whose nerves are not so easily affected, and who are at liberty to heat their own dens and adulterate their own atmosphere as much as they please, fatal instances sometimes occur; and the only wonder is that they are not more general.

At this season the double windows have long been adjusted, which further assist to dull the sombre and fugitive light which Nature allows us. Generally every room is provided with what is called a *Klap Fenster*, or double pane, on a hinge, the one opening inwards, the other outwards, which are *sometimes* allowed to admit the outer air for ten minutes in the day; but in many families such a pneumatic antipathy, descended from father to son, still prevails, that these inlets of a cooler atmosphere are strictly interdicted; or, if there beforehand, carefully pasted over with paper. At the same time the height and size of the apartments—the absence of all carpets and curtains—the number of thoroughfares, all, bedrooms included, with their doors wide open, so that a long suite or circle of apartments answers only the purpose of one enormous room—here maintains a circulation of air which obviates the feeling of a confined atmosphere. This equable temperature to live in, retire to rest and rise by, is certainly the most agreeable luxury, and there can be no surprise that foreigners rail at our rooms which freeze them by the window or scorch them by the fire; but a more important fact attending this general distribution of heat consists in the absence of all pulmonary complaints and rheumatic maladies in this severe climate, though the want of fresh air—no necessary attendant, however, on this mode of heating—engenders other diseases. How many a delicate girl in our own consumption-stricken land lays the first stone of her early grave in her finishing year at some boarding-school, where she sleeps in a freezing atmosphere, never sufficiently warms herself by day, and frequently fails in that generous diet which might qualify these evils! With us it is a prevailing idea that a sudden transition from a warm room to the cold outer air is attended with great risk to the health. How often are we reminded, on entering a house, to cast off part of our wrappers lest we should miss the warmth on returning to the external atmosphere! But this is a mistake—for those who issue from their homes, in the sharpest day of winter, thoroughly warm, are much less sensible to the cold, and equally less liable to its ill effects, than those who, having sat, chilly and shivery, over their warmthless grates, seek in out-door exercise a more active circulation, and often return to spend this acquired warmth gradually during the rest of the day, and to be kept awake for the first hours of the night by that common inconvenience of cold feet. It is a fact, which all upon trial will acknowledge, that issuing, properly clothed, from a warm bath, the outer atmosphere will appear to have increased in the interim several degrees in warmth; and the Russian peasant,

who exemplifies this case in its greatest extreme by running from his vapour-bath at the moment when his perspiration is most profuse to roll in the snow, or to dash through a hole in the ice into the river, is hardly sensible of the violence of this transition.

After this summary of the house, and the various pros and cons of its internal economy, you must now accompany me to the numerous buildings scattered around, all on the same scale of grandeur as itself, where the domestic herds pass their long winter in shelter, warmth, and almost darkness. In the first we entered, a noble edifice 120 feet long, and supported down the centre by a row of solid pillars, above a thousand sheep were most magnificently lodged, affording as they congregated round their cribs, or quietly stopped eating to gaze upon us, a most novel and striking picture of a vast northern fold. In another building was a herd of stalled cattle, some destined for slaughter, others milch kine, with many a bare-footed peasant-girl and half-full machine of milk at their sides. Farther on, the pigs had their domicile, and the fowls theirs: and in the midst of these buildings rose the *Brandtwein's Küche*, or brandy-kitchen, where the process of distilling from rye, barley, or potatoes, goes on night and day; the refuse drains of which contribute to fatten the cattle we have just quitted. It will easily be supposed that the task of calculating and providing food for this multiplication of mouths, all dependent on the help of man, is no light one. Every animal has so many pounds of hay allotted to him per day, and each week's consumption is something which it never entered into the heart of an English farmer to conceive: and, if the winter exceeds its usual limits—if these poor quadrupeds, which go up into their annual ark in the month of October, be not released till the beginning of May, a scarcity of food can hardly be hindered. Fresh litter is strewed daily, which never being removed, the cattle stand at least six feet higher at the close than at the commencement of their captivity. In this consists the main provision of manure for the summer's use. The sheep were all of a picked Merino breed, to which the closest attention is paid to preserve it intact. This is a branch of husbandry only lately undertaken in Estonia, and at present attended with great success and profit. Every sheep has its parentage, day of birth, and number, carefully registered in a book, and is individually recognised by a peculiar combination of perforations on the ear, which by a simple scale of numerals may be made to indicate above a thousand. Thus any *black sheep* of accidental introduction can be instantly detected. Here were, however, a couple of English sheep—nice, gentle, useless, shepherdess-looking animals, with long coarse shaggy fleeces and short legs, on whom the Saxon shepherd looked down most disdainfully, pronouncing them good for nothing but to *eat*. Evil betide the flock if, by an open window or insecure door, a wolf force its way into the fold! One savage animal has been known to worry hundreds in the night without devouring one.

From the farm-yard we turned our course to the garden, or what will prove to be such when this three feet of snow shall have disappeared. Here were also a number of tender creatures under shelter in the noble line of greenhouses and hothouses, while the graperies and peacheries were in different stages of forwardness—the trees in the latter just putting forth their delicate pink blossoms. These, however, and the other usual exotic tenants of such glass houses, elicited no sentiment beyond that of admiration; but when we reached a small scanty plant of common ivy—that child of English growth, which clusters from bough to bough, and wanders free over church, cottage, and ruin, here stuck in a pot and feebly grasping a slight treillage — my sentimental side was fairly touched—"Home, sweet home; there is no place like home!"

LETTER THE EIGHTH.

Ubiquity and transferability of happiness—Exhilarating effects of the cold—Winter-walks—Character of the woods—The wolves—Christmas and New Year's day—Sledging and its difficulties—The great dinner-party—Stoical propensities of Estonian gentlemen—Attractions of Estonian ladies—Novel dishes—Length of visits.

To those who live so long in one place, or under one set of habits, as to render the idea of any other unbearable—who fancy a winter's day without a blazing fire must be insupportable, and a country life without the aid of a daily post a kind of banishment;—to such as these an avowal of perfect happiness and comfort from one buried in a remote country-house, on a remote part of the shores of the Baltic,—for whom to all intent and purpose the capital exists not, nor scarcely the world, beyond the white line or dark forest which bounds the horizon,—must appear nothing less than the contradictory perversity of a most obstinate species of philosophy. Is it possible that people can be so wilful and absurd as to fancy themselves happy in a situation where they neither eat, drink, sleep, nor warm themselves in the manner they have been accustomed to—where they neither see an object nor hear a sound (one dear face and voice in this case excepted) that has ever been familiar to them before, and where, in short, all is new, strange, and in many respects uncongenial? This is all very true, and in the providential adaptation of the human mind—in its alternate tenacity and facility—in the strength with which it adheres to the old home, and the readiness with which it engrafts itself upon the new one, we may justly find cause equally for wonder as for gratitude. But, besides kindness, that best of all gifts, whether at home or abroad, the great mainspring of this excellent transferability of human happiness lies in the long-established possession of habits of rational occupation—that active philosophy which renders all other superfluous—that house which the mind carries about with itself, and which, once firmly constructed, is easily packed and easily transported—contracting and expanding to circumstance, and adapting itself to every clime and soil. Would that the heart were as accommodating! but this, like a wayward child, either pitches its tent in some forbidden nook—or trusts its treasure to some harsh keeper—or buries it in some lonely grave: and, while the mind is boasting its own wholesome stores of bread and water, silently broods over the sweeter gifts that might have been its own.

There is something in the sense of strangeness—in the luxury of wonder—of which, as appertaining to the other dreams of early youth, we deplore the loss, though, on the other hand, in all cultivated minds it is superseded by that ceaseless spring of interest which has the twofold advantage of being becoming to all ages and applicable to all scenes. For it is a consolatory fact, and ought especially to be borne in mind by those who, bound by home duties, are apt to consider travellers, of all their fellow-creatures, the most enviable, that those who cannot find objects to interest them within a five-miles' drive of their own doors, and especially in our richly-stored England, will find a foreign soil just as sterile. A modern Russian author wisely says, "Instead of travelling in order to learn, we had better learn in order to travel;" and who will deny the truth of this?

It is seldom that a foreigner enters a new country, as I have done this,

"just in time to be too late:"—Summer's busy workshop has long been closed, and Nature has shrouded herself deep within her monumental garments, though, as if to cheer us on the long and dreary winter pilgrimage before us, she charitably reveals a few glimpses of her real features, shows us here a line of bold grey rocks butting through the snow, there a dashing cascade, which the frost has not yet completely stiffened, till our faith in her hidden beauties is only equalled by our impatience to behold them.

There is something, however, very exhilarating in this breathless, still, bright cold—with a clean white expanse—a spotless world before you—every tree fringed—every stream stopped—freedom to range over every summer impediment; while the crystal snow, lighting up into a delicate pink or pearly hue, or glistening with the brightest prismatic colours beneath the clear, low sun, and assuming a beautiful lilac or blue where our long shadows intercept its rays, can no longer be stigmatised as a dead lifeless white. We walk every day, and no sooner are the heavy double doors which effectually seal our house heard to open, than half a dozen huge, deep-mouthed cattle-hounds come bounding to meet us through the deep snow, oversetting, with the first unwieldy caress, some little one of our party, scarce so tall as themselves, and even besetting the biggest with a battery of heavy demonstrations, to which it is difficult to present a firm front. Sometimes we take the beaten track of the road, where peasants with rough carts, generally put together with less iron than an English labourer would wear in his shoes, pass on in files of nine or ten, as often as not the sheepish-looking driver with his elf locks superadding his own weight to the already overladen little horse—or where a nimble-footed peasant woman, with high cap and clean sheepskin coat, plunges half-leg high into the deep snow to give you room, and nodding, and showing her white teeth, cheerily ejaculates *Terre hommikust*, or Good day. Or we follow a track into the woods so narrow that we walk in each other's steps like wild Indians, and the great dogs sink up to their bodies in the snow whilst endeavouring to pass us. This is the land of pines—lofty, erect battalions—their bark as smooth as the mast of a ship—their branches regular as a ladder, varying scarce an inch in girth in fifty feet of growth—for miles interrupted only by a leaning, never a crooked tree—with an army of sturdy Lilliputians clustering round their bases—fifty heads starting up where one yard of light is admitted. What becomes of all the pruning, and trimming, and training—the days of precious labour spent on our own woods? Nature here does all this, and immeasurably better, for her volunteers, who stand closer, grow faster, and soar higher, than the carefully planted and transplanted children of our soil. Here and there a bare jagged trunk, and a carpet of fresh-hewn boughs beneath, show where some peasant-urchin has indulged in sport which with us would be amenable to the laws—viz. mounted one of these grenadiers of the forest, hewing off every successive bough beneath him, till, perched at giddy height aloft, he clings to a tapering point which his hand may grasp. The higher he goes the greater the feat, and the greater the risk to his vagabond neck in descending the noble and mutilated trunk. In perambulating these woods, the idea would sometimes cross us that the wolves, the print of whose footsteps, intercepted by the dotted track of the hare and slenderly defined claws of numerous birds, are seen in different directions, and even beneath the windows of our house, might prowl by day as well as by night. One day, when, fortunately perhaps, unescorted by the huge dogs, we were mounting a hill to a neighbouring mill, my companion suddenly halted, and laying her hand on mine silently pointed to a moving object within fifty yards of us. It was a great brute of a wolf stalking leisurely along—its high bristly back set up—its head prowling down—who took no notice of us, but slowly pursued the same path into the wood which we had quitted a few minutes before.

We must both plead guilty to blanched cheeks, but beyond this to no signs of cowardice; and, in truth, the instances are so rare of their attacking human beings, even the most defenceless children, that we had no cause for fear. They war not on man, unless under excessive pressure of hunger, or when, as in the case of a butcher, his clothes are impregnated with the smell of fresh blood. This is so certain an attraction that peasants carrying butchers' meat are followed by wolves, and often obliged to compound for their own safety by flinging the dangerous commodity amongst them; or, if in a sledge, three or four of these ravenous animals will spring upon the basket of meat and tear it open before their eyes. Wherever an animal falls, there, though to all appearance no cover nor sign of a wolf be visible for miles round, several will be found congregated in half an hour's time. Such is their horrid thirst for blood, that a wounded wolf knows that only by the strictest concealment can he escape being torn in pieces by his companions. As for the dogs, it is heart-rending to think of the numbers which pay for their fidelity with their lives. If a couple of wolves prowl round a house, or fold, at night, a dozen dogs, with every variety of tone, from the sharp yap of the shepherd's terrier to the hoarse bay of the cattle-hound, will plunge after them, and put them to flight. But if one, more zealous, venture beyond his companions, the cunning brutes face about, seize him, and before three minutes are over there is nothing left of poor *Carrier Pois*, or sheep-boy,—a common name for these great mastiffs,—but a few tufts of bloody hair. The cattle defend themselves valiantly, and the horses, and the mares especially who have a foal at their side, put themselves in an attitude of defence, and parry off the enemy with their fore-feet —their iron hoofs often taking great effect. But woe be to them if the wolf, breaking through the shower of blows, spring at the throat, or, stealing behind his prey, fasten on the flank!—once down all is over, though there be but one wolf. Sometimes, in a sudden wheel round, the wolf will seize upon a cow's tail, on which he hangs with his jaws of ten-horse power, while the poor animal drags him round and round the field, and finally leaves the unfortunate member in his grasp, too happy to escape with a stump. At one time these animals increased so frightfully in number that the Ritterschaft, or assembly of knights, by which name the internal senate of this province is designated, appointed a reward of five roubles for every pair of ears brought to the magistrate of the district. This worked some change, and, in proportion as the wolves have fallen off, the Ritterschaft has dropped its price, though an opposite policy would perhaps have been more politic, and now a pair of ears, generally secured from the destruction of a nest of young ones, does not fetch more than a silver rouble, or three roubles and a half.* An old plan to attract them was to tie a pig in a sack, squeaking of course, upon a cart, and drive him rapidly through a wood or morass. Any cry of an animal is a gathering sound for the wolf, but the voice of man, made in his Creator's image, will hold him aloof. The blast of a horn greatly annoys them, a fiddle makes them fly, and the gingling of bells is also a means of scaring them, which, besides the expedience of proclaiming your approach in dark nights on these noiseless sledge-roads, is one reason why all winter equipages are fitted up with bells.

Foreigners may laugh at our "never ending, still beginning" national topic, the weather, but we may as justly retort on their *Bahn*, or sledging-road, which at this season generally offers a better beaten track for discussion than for traffic. The chances of there being a good bahn, or no bahn at all, for Christmas—the probabilities of those scattered members of a family, all verging to one common centre at this period, being obliged, on their return, to exchange the smooth soles of their sledges for the rough wheels of their carriages, or *vice versâ*, are here specu-

* Nevertheless a thousand wolves upon the average are killed in a year.

lated and betted upon with the utmost zest. For though frost and occasional falls of snow commence sometimes as early as October, a steady sufficiency of the latter for sledging can hardly be reckoned upon till the new year be turned—a visitor, it must be remembered, not admitted over the Russian frontier until twelve days after its reception with other nations. Why Estonia, however, whose Lutheran calendar has no jealous saints to regard, should continue in the old style, the neighbouring provinces of Livonia and Courland having already departed from it, I am not able to say. For this reason, our Christmas and New Year's Day were solemnized in the solitude of our own thoughts; for though each day of our lives be a birthday—an anniversary—the commencement of a new year—yet mutable, careless, human nature requires and loves to be weighted down by fixed dates, which occur like stages in life, reminding us of the road we are travelling—or act like friendly monitors, calling together in kindly, or at any rate in common thought, families long separated or long estranged, and speaking to the hardened conscience with a power no other influence can exert. There are few hearts that can resist the pleadings of an anniversary, be it of sorrow or joy—that can steel themselves to those mute admonitions which tell

> "Of duties first imposed,
> Long since neglected;
> Of true love first disclosed,
> Long since rejected."

Happy those who can meet such days with undiminished self-satisfaction and peace of mind!—they are the unerring tests of a good conscience.

When the 6th of January, N. S., therefore arrived, with its holiday cheer and feasting, all sentiment on our parts had passed away, or rather refused to be transposed, and I was left the freer to look on the outer frame of society which this occasion offered. Christmas is here treated as including three days, each being considered sacred alike, or rather none of the three being attended with any observances except those of general hilarity and visiting. These days are designated, and invitations worded, as the first, second, and third *Weihnachts Tage*, for the first of which we were bidden to a large assembly at the house of a neighbouring family. To prepare for a dinner party at a residence twelve wersts removed, we had therefore to commence our evening toilette at the unusual hour of eleven in the morning—reminding us of the diary of one of our English princesses, who mentions, "the hour of dinner is becoming marvellously late; I dined yesterday at twelve o'clock,"—or taking us back to the times of our Queen Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth, when it may be remembered the dinner was delayed till the unprecedented hour of two—it being further recorded in the chronicle that, by an original and most happy thought of the Earl of Leicester, the clock on the great tower at Kenilworth Castle, during the whole time of the Queen's stay, pointed to the hour of two, in order perpetually to remind her majesty of the pleasures of the banquet. It must be hoped that the royal visitor wore some little private kettle of her own, in order to rectify the horological mistakes to which this delicate attention of her host must have given rise.

By twelve o'clock we were equipped; not without considerable apprehension, however, of being too late, nor were our movements now such as attend those tardy belles of our own country, who, having no fears of frost-bites or of lethargic stupor before their eyes, skip into the carriage, and are whirled off before the door is well clapped to. Here, on the other hand, just as my foot was descending very nimbly into the sledge, I felt myself pulled back by my tender hostess, who, beneath the wools and furs of my outer habiliments, had espied a most unguarded satin shoe and silk stocking. I was now hurried back again into the warm hall, where, before I well knew what they were about, my feet were in the firm grasp of two buxom, smiling Estonian handmaidens, the one pulling on a red worsted sock, the other a fur boot, and, in their hurry, reversing and not mending the matter, when they had found out the mistake; while a sweet laughing pair of eyes,

gleaming from the depths of a fur collar, stood over me enjoying the joke. This necessary preamble finished, for the thermometer stood at 5° of Fahrenheit, we seated ourselves, or rather sank into the bed of down, with which the seat and floor of the sledge were spread, when men-servants and maid-servants crowded zealously round to smooth and fold our cloaks firm about us; which done, several large loose down cushions were tumbled in, and tucked over our knees and down into every spare corner —a bear-skin drawn firm over all—and the leather finally hooked tight above. And now the coachman, a bearded Russian, with bare neck, and grey cloth coat of home-spun wool well stuffed beneath with a warm sheepskin, and indented at the ample waist with a belt of bright colours, threw one last look behind him to ascertain that his ladies were in their right places—bless him! we could not have stirred—and a man-servant in ponderous cloak having mounted beside him, now gathered his round braided reins in a whole handful together, and off set the four eager horses galloping abreast like the steeds in a Roman car. These sledges may be best understood as a slight barouche, put upon soles instead of wheels, with long transverse poles to prevent them from overturning, and stretchers of leather like extended wings in front to screen the traveller from the showers of snow which fly from the horses' hoofs. It must not be supposed that sledging is here such smooth gliding work as it is generally represented; on the contrary, a succession of drifts, worn into deeper declivities and higher ascents by the continual traffic, will subject you to a bumping kind of movement, which, in spite of your solid feather-bed casing, is neither convenient nor agreeable. Then suddenly the sledge declines a fathom deep on one side, and out flies the coachman's or footman's leg to act as an additional prop, and you lie comfortably cradled upon your half-suffocated companion, when, with a loud jingle of all four horses, the sledge is jerked out of the hole, and the travellers once more stuck upright. And then, perhaps, when the track becomes narrower, the outer horses are driven into the loose deep snow, and one of them tumbles over head and ears into an invisible ditch, whence, his long traces giving him perfect liberty, he clambers out again unassisted, shakes the snow from his sides, and snorts and stamps with the utmost impatience to be off again. The two centre *Deichsel Pferde*, or pole-horses, are fastened firmer, and the middle of the track being always the best, the most spirited of the Baron's stables are generally placed here, while the side horses take the luck of the road, jumping over loose drifts, or picking their way with their delicate feet over any road-side encumbrance, and, with their graceful necks and gleaming eyes at full liberty, are never frightened, and never at a loss to extricate themselves from any difficulty. Hedges and walls are the destruction of sledging roads; wherever there is a barrier, there the snow collects, and a line of battened fence, here the usual partition, will ruin the track—sunk ditches are the only mode of divisions advisable for snow countries. The intelligence of the coachman is no less surprising than that of his horses: regardless of the summer line of road, he steers straight over bank, river, and morass, for his object, and like a bird of passage seldom misses the mark. Thus it is that in the dull long season of winter, when friends are most wanted, they are here brought closest together; for the same morass which in summer is circumnavigated by a drive of twenty wersts may in winter be crossed by one of half an hour's duration.

The great structure of Fähna—for such was the name of the residence to which we were bound—was soon seen rearing itself in the distance, a square mass against the sky, without a tree or object near it. Here, our wrappers being gradually peeled off, we issued like butterflies from our woollen cells, and were ushered into a large assembly, where the hostess, a pretty, graceful young woman, came forward, and welcomed us with the utmost courtesy and good breeding, and even found a few pleasing, though imperfect, words in English to say to her foreign visitor,

with a kindness of manner and intention which quite won my heart. Immediately upon our arrival the *frühstück* of Swiss cheese, and pickled *strömling*, a fish peculiar to Estonia, with red and white liqueurs, was handed round, after which a servant whispered something to the hostess, who rose, and with a distinct voice and graceful manner simply said, "May I beg you all to table?" and, herself taking the lead with the oldest gentleman of the party, we filed off, a party of at least fifty, a cluster of little boys and girls bringing up the rear; for an invitation to the heads of a family is tacitly understood to include all the olive-branches, however numerous or tender. As each couple entered the dining-room, the cavalier bowed profoundly, disengaged himself, and went his way, while all the ladies seated themselves on one side and all the gentlemen on the other, the hostess heading the table, whilst her husband mingled with his male guests. Conversation was therefore restricted to the different lines, and the process of serving dinner absolving, as I have before observed, the gentlemen from all obligation of courtesy, and no intimation to venture a conversation across the narrow table being apparent, not a single gentleman addressed his fair *vis-à-vis* during the whole repast. This is an additional reason for retaining our old English mode, as engendering trifling attentions which tend to keep up the outward semblance of good breeding, the absence of which I am inclined to think in some measure contributes to the Transatlantic style of manners which are observable among the present generation of young Estonian nobles. The courtesies of the table began with the well-side and water-drawing times of the patriarchs; the woman-despising Turk eats alone. My own position was very enviable between two charming, ladylike women, who proved the most agreeable representatives of their country. The dinner was sumptuous, with a profusion of splendid glass and plate, the latter, as well as the beautiful damask linen, marked with the maiden name of our hostess, and which, it may be as well to mention here, though I should grieve to see that pretty, animated face shrouded beneath a mourning cap, all revert with the rest of her dowry to the widow on her husband's death. Among the novel dishes introduced on this occasion was the elk, a harmless animal which infests the Livonian woods, in flavour much resembling venison; and a preserve of rose-leaves, a luscious kind of ambrosia, like eating perfumes, or a smack of paradise on earth; and, lastly, a dish which the season alone rendered peculiar, for who would have thought of ices on Christmas-day? But no one could quarrel with the cold interloper, for the room was hot to suffocation, and the delicious walnut-cream ice melted most gratefully down our throats. When the last dishes of fruits and bon-bons had been handed round, our hostess rose, and, the gentlemen clustering at the door, each resumed his lady where he had left her, and, conducting her into the next room, again made his bow and escaped. Coffee was now handed round, and a long and superb suite of rooms being open to us, the whole party of ladies paraded up and down in distinct groups: after which the matrons sat down to sober converse, and talked as good wives should do, of their children and their *wirthschaft*, and some drew forth little ladylike bits of embroidery, on which their fair fingers were soon busied, while the older ones knitted away most energetically at the "weary pund."

Meanwhile the younger portion, including many beautiful and graceful young women, well dressed and elegant in manner, clustered together in girlish guise, in the deep recesses of the windows, or round the piano, or played at bagatelle with many an animated laugh and jest. And where were the gentlemen all this time? doubtless compensating themselves for the compulsory separation they had endured during the twenty long courses of dinner, and mingling gaily with the fair beings from whom it must have been a punishment to them to sever. But alas! the muse of gallantry shakes her head, and falteringly and most unwillingly owns

the incredible fact that to "eyes like loadstars and tongues sweet air," these young stoics preferred the attractions of cards and smoke—found more beauty in the length of a pipe than in the slender tall figures which roved up and down the suite of rooms, more interesting study in a brown cigar than in the soft or brilliant glances of the maiden party. After a couple of hours tea was served, but still the gentlemen kept close behind the clouds with which they enveloped their godheads from our grosser view, nor till supper was served—here conducted on the same formal style of separation as the dinner—did they venture to emerge. For their credit's sake, may the next generation of their countrywomen be neither so fair nor so pleasing!

It was a beautiful starlight night as, with a repetition of every precaution, we again took to our sledges, and a procession of at least ten kept together in a harmony of bells for the first three wersts of our road, when, diverging to separate tracks across the morass, each lost sight of the other, and we reached our home at midnight, having been absent just twelve hours,—rather too expensive a mode of visiting.

LETTER THE NINTH.

Girl at her wheel—Estonian peasant—Misfortunes of a sitter—Interior of an Estonian cottage—Farming tenure of the peasant—Enfranchisement of the peasantry—Its effects—New names—Difficulties of choice—Visit to church—A Lutheran clergyman—Church history.

After the festivities of this pseudo Christmas and New Year, all conducted in the same style of plenty, hospitality, and formality I have described, were passed over, which could hardly be said to terminate till after the 18th of January, this being the fête of the three kings, an old Roman Catholic observance, kept up rather as prolonging the season of good cheer than from any religious motive, we returned to our usual quiet life, where, if other occupation failed, the *Volkstube* offered a bevy of rural subjects for the pencil, with no trouble beyond that of selection. And not seldom was a fair-haired maiden weeded from among her companions, and transplanted with her spinning-wheel to our apartment, where, modestly pursuing her own vocations, she gave matter to mine. One day, to diversify the subject, a tall Estonian peasant was ushered in, bearing a note from a neighbouring family, wherein it appeared that, in consequence of some bantering questions and promises, they had sent the best-looking man the estate could boast to represent the physiognomy and costume of his class. And truly, as fine and good-looking a young man stood before us as needed to be seen. At first he returned our glance with rather more courage than a peasant here usually ventures to show; but, on being told his errand, blushed like a girl, and proceeded to place himself into the required position with a *mauvaise honte* which, it must be owned, was at first not limited to himself. He wore the regular peasant's costume, his long hair falling on his shoulders; a coat made of undyed black wool down to his heels, with metal buttons and red leather frogs; and his feet clad in the national *passeln*, or sandals, of untanned cow's hide. After the first novelty was over he stood sensibly and respectfully enough; and, being shown his miniature fac-simile, and told that it would go to England, acknowledged it to be *vegga illos*, very beautiful. Half a rouble and a glass of brandy made him happy, and he took his leave in perfect good humour with himself and us. But a few days after, a disastrous sequel to this adventure reached our ears. Under the conviction that he had been subject to the spells of a sorceress, his lady-love cast him off for another; his fellows taunted and avoided him; while, added to this, the innocent victim himself was in the utmost terror of mind lest this mysterious delineation of his person should prove the preamble to his being banished either to Siberia or—to England! It is to be hoped his personal charms soon repaired the first loss, but I could never hear anything further of my unfortunate sitter.

Wishing to see the Estonian peasant under every aspect, I requested my hostess—one whose heart feels interest in the most stupid, and love for the most contemned, of her adopted countrymen—to exhibit to me some peasant's dwelling which might fairly represent the comforts of this class. Accordingly we drove to the abode of a hard-working, respectable Estonian, about three wersts removed, and were helped out of our sledge by a gaunt host with streaming locks, who stroked us down in the national fashion, and begged us to enter. The house was a one-storied erection, built of roughly-squared logs, and occupying as much space as any of our large old-fashioned

farm-houses, with a double wall on the entrance side, separated by a passage of about six feet wide, which greatly tends both to warmth in winter and coolness in summer. In this passage an extremely filthy sow and a whole litter of little pigs were grunting and tumbling about with some other little animals, seemingly of the same generic origin, but which, on nearer inspection, proved to be part of our host's youthful family. To pass through the inner wall we stepped over a high ledge, through an aperture wide enough for a Lambert, but hardly high enough for a child of twelve years old, more adapted apparently for quadrupeds than for men. Once housed, we were obliged to wait a few minutes before our eyes accustomed themselves to the darkness, or threw off the film of water with which the strong, stinging atmosphere of wood-smoke obscured them, when the first object we discerned was a rosy peasant-girl weaving a piece of linen in the same gloom by which we could scarcely distinguish the loom. The room where we stood was at least twenty-five feet long, with a black earthen floor, strewn with fir-tips, and the chief object was the great stove. This was a huge mass of masonry towering among the dry rafters of the roof, with rough ledges of stones, up and down which a second litter of children were climbing in their shifts, while on the highest ledge lay a baby fast asleep. A projecting shelf of wood ran round two sides of the room, about two feet from the floor, which, strewn with straw, serves as the family-bed for the night, is converted by day to any household use, and was conveniently fitted up with hen-coops underneath. There was no chimney in this apartment, and no light but from the low door. Further on were two other rooms, mere little dens, with a pane of dusky glass in each, and a few articles of furniture—a couple of chairs and chests for clothes. The same roof houses the little horse and other cattle. There was nothing in all this to disgust—hard fare and independent habits; and when we took our leave we made the little dirty shock-headed children very happy with some rolls of white bread, a dainty they see much more rarely than our poor children do cake.

This peasant occupies about twenty-five acres of land upon the estate where I am sojourning. Every estate is thus parcelled out, the proprietor having a considerable portion under his own management, the rest being divided among the peasants, who, from time immemorial, have belonged to the land, and till within the last few years in the condition of serfs. The same fields, therefore, for which they formerly paid a rent, limited only by the will of the *Herr*, or lord, they now hold upon a tenure fixed by law, which is as follows: Each peasant householder, or *Wirth*, occupies so much land, for which he pays rent in the shape of so many days' labour, man and horse, per week, upon the lord's fields; by certain contributions of corn; and of a calf, a goose, so many fowls or eggs, and so many bundles of flax—all of which last small tithes generally come within the lady's department, who has thus the products of a most extensive farm-yard to register and superintend. The smaller the occupation, the fewer the days of labour to perform, and the poorer the peasant. A so-called two days' *wirth* generally performs the requisite labour in his own person; but a six days' *wirth*, a rank which the peasant we had just quitted occupies, sends his labourers to supply his place, and, by sending two men three successive days, has the rest of his week undisturbed. Upon this estate no less than 360 days' work is contributed weekly, and yet the labour is not equal to the demand. This allotment per week is the only fair arrangement; for, though many a week in winter occurs when no man can work, yet were the proprietor to claim all his permitted days only in the summer, the peasant would not have a day left to reap or sow for himself.

The act of enfranchisement in Estonia has not been accompanied by the advantages which those who abstractedly reckon the state of independence too high, and that of serfage too low, might expect. To this it may be urged that the blessing of freedom was bestowed on the Estonian peasant before

he was in a condition to understand its import, though truly such a privilege is better given to a people too early than wrested by them too late. It redounds to the credit of these provinces of Estonia, Livonia, and Courland, that they were the first in the empire to coalesce with the late Emperor Alexander by enfranchising their peasantry —an act which took place in 1828; and it is quite a pity that our admiration for so noble a deed should be in any way interrupted by the troublesome collateral circumstance of their being pecuniarily the gainers thereby. When the peasants were serfs, their owners were interested in preserving them from absolute want; and in bad harvests the peasantry became, what they are to this day in Russia Proper, a real burthen to their lord. Also, whenever the serf was not able to pay his own poll-tax, the seigneur had to make up the deficiency; but now that the Estonian peasant is a free man, all these responsibilities, which he as little desired as understood to undertake, fall upon his own shoulders: for though many a humane seigneur still supplies the same help as formerly, yet these are but worthy exceptions. Consequently a failure in crops, added to the national improvidence, exposes the peasant to hardship and starvation which he never knew in his serf condition. Among the regulations intended as a substitute to these habits of dependence, a law has been instituted compelling each peasant, in good seasons, to contribute so much corn to the *Bauer Klete*, or peasant granary, thus realising a fund of provision against the winters of famine. But as the Estonian has been placed in a state of freedom before he knew that forethought and prudence were its only safeguards, he seizes every occasion to evade this law, and, if the Herr be not vigilant in enforcing it, the storehouse is found empty when famine has finished every other resource. One characteristic consequence of this emancipation was the adoption of family names by the peasants, who hitherto, like the Russian serf, had been designated only by his own and his father's baptismal appellatives. This accession of dignity was conferred only a few years back, when it cost the lord and lady no little trouble and invention to hunt up the requisite number and variety of names for the tenants of their estates. The gentleman took the dictionary, the lady, Walter Scott, for reference—with us it would have been the Bible—and homely German words were given, or old Scottish names revived, which may one day perplex a genealogist. The worst of it was, these poor creatures were very difficult to please, and many a young man who went away happy with his new family distinction returned the next day, with a sheepish look, owning that his lady had put him out of conceit of it, and that he would trouble the *Erra* (the Estonian corruption of *Herr*) to provide him with another, not seldom ending by begging leave to adopt the aristocratic, unsullied, sixteen or thirty-two quartered name of the Count or Baron under whom he served. But however liberal of his neighbours' names, the Estonian noble is in no hurry to bestow his own; far from running the risk of such vile identity, he does not even allow the peasant the same national appellation which countrymen of the same soil, whether high or low, generally wear alike. The aristocrat is an *Esthländer*, the peasant an *Esthe*. The noble's wife is a *Frau*, the peasant's a *Weib;* and any transposition of these terms would be deemed highly insulting.

Having thus seen the Estonian peasant in his home state, our next view of him was in a congregated mass: this occurred upon occasion of our first visit to the village church, about five miles from our superb dwelling, and of which, with rare exception, they are the exclusive monopolisers. Here we found the peasants' sledges standing in double rows as thick along the road as the carriages before the Opera-house at a morning concert; and, entering through a dense crowd, smelling strongly of their sheepskin habiliments and the smoky atmosphere in which they live, we mounted a gallery to a pew reserved for the family, whence

we looked down upon a platform of human heads of every variety of rich blondes and browns—blacks there were but few, and greys none at all; though of wrinkles, failing limbs, and other signs of age, there was a premature profusion. The service, which was in Estonian, had commenced, and after the first careless wonder with which you listen to a new language subsided, my eyes busied themselves with what was around them.

The men were all on one side; their long hair, untouched by scissors since their birth, divided down the centre of the head, and flowing on their shoulders: the women on the other, with high helmet-shaped caps of every variety of bright colour, their gay ribbons and bright locks streaming promiscuously from beneath; or sometimes all this lowly vanity covered with a white handkerchief, which, disposed in a band across the forehead, and falling in ample folds down the cheeks, ennobled many a homely set of features. Beauty there was but little: here and there a young rosy cheek and bright eye shot through the crowd, but the generality were plain rather than ugly. The first impression on the mind of this dense crowd of attentive poor was almost painful. Our Saviour's audiences were only the poor; and amongst the silent, listening throng who stood, each leaning with clasped hands upon his foremost neighbour's shoulder—here and there a child held aloft above the crush of limbs, while a row of sick and decrepit beings, ugly, abject, yet venerable, lying on mattresses in every picturesque form, occupied the centre, and Hebrew-draped heads and Apostolic countenances crowded around—you missed only the divine aspect from this ready-made and most touching picture. The women were chiefly in sheepskins or wolfskins, with gay bands round their waists; the men in the same, or in a coarse brown cloth, with rows of silver buttons down the breast. The scene was enlivened by the presence of a bride—in other words a *fiancée*—who, at the publication of her banns, has the enviable privilege of appearing before the public in every rag and ribbon which it ever entered the head of any Estonian Madge Wildfire to desire, being literally loaded with all the ribbons, handkerchiefs, and petticoats which herself or her neighbours can muster; only the outer edge of each, in the insolence of her wealth, being visible, till the bride looks like the walking pattern-book of the *Kirchspiel*, or parish, and the admiring swain views at one glance both his companion and her wardrobe for life. But the head is more particularly the centre of attraction, the helmet-shaped cap on these occasions being stuck full of flowers, ribbons, scraps of tailor's cabbage, peacock's feathers, and, in short, all the sweepings of the Baron's mansion, like an over-garnished shape of blancmange; while the young lady, oppressed alike by her feelings and her finery, keeps every tag in a perpetual quiver, and hardly dares to lift up her heated countenance from her panoply of garments.

The service, to our ideas, was by no means impressive; being little more than a succession of monotonous psalm-singing in a minor key sustained by the congregation, after which the clergyman, a spare-looking gentleman with a very long nose, and, I should be inclined to think, a very cold one — for the churches are not heated, and the thermometer kept its average of 10° of Fahrenheit—delivered a sermon, leaning with Knox-like energy over the edge of the pulpit, and at the full stretch of his voice; for the congregation, who otherwise were devotion itself, and would not have disturbed him by a whisper, took no account of coughs, sneezes, blowing noses without the aid of pocket handkerchiefs, and other little noises, including now and then a stout squall from a baby, and as loud a hush from the mother, till the preacher's voice was sometimes drowned. The church itself was a heavy ancient building, with simply groined roof, gay bedizened altar, and whitewashed walls behung with tin urns and armorial bearings. Before the conclusion of the sermon a contribution was levied with long pole and bag at end, as elsewhere, into which kopecks of all weights and sizes tumbled, upon

which the clergyman retreated to the altar, and, facing the audience, chanted a few sentences in a high key. This was the signal for dismissal: the solid mass stirred, and broke up into hundreds of fragments—the reeking church was abandoned—each recognised his own little sledge and horse among multitudes which seemed cast in the same mould—poles stuck—rope-reins entangled—bells jingled—and voices scolded and laughed alternately; and in five minutes the whole congregation were scouring away across the country.

The Lutheran clergyman, in point of pecuniary independence, is barely kept on a respectable footing. He is paid in corn by the landholders, each peasant also contributing his corn, fowls, and eggs, for his little tenure, though in neither case above a fiftieth of the produce. He has also an allotment of glebe-land, with a partial service from the peasants, and a house kept in repair, even to the sweeping the chimneys and mending a window—the funds for this purpose proceeding from the Sunday collection, which, subscribed chiefly by the poor, I had hoped had been destined for the poor, and which are lodged in the hands of the *Kirchenvorsteher*, or churchwarden, always one of the noblesse in the vicinity.

In a large parish also there is some amount of fees—for a marriage in the upper classes fifty roubles—for administering the Sacrament twenty-five—which the pastor pockets; while the peasants bring their fifty kopecks, and in the latter case are never-failing attendants. Let no one imagine, however, that the pastor's life is a sinecure. Besides his weekly duties, and the penance of a cold church seven months in the year, he has to attend the call of his poor parishioners, scattered frequently over a circumference of a hundred wersts; while twice in the year all the boys and girls in the parish assemble for three weeks under his roof, to be instructed and examined previous to confirmation; on which occasions the *Frau Pastorin* sets all of them to spin her flax, twine her cord, and do other little household jobs, and not seldom has the honour of entertaining the young countesses or baronesses who have come on the same errand, and must pass through the same *Lehre*. Thus it is that the sacraments are strictly observed, sometimes it is to be hoped for their own sakes, but principally as a political ordinance by which government keeps its eye on every individual in the realm; obliging him at stated intervals to emerge from the deep torrent of Russian population and bear witness of his existence. No one can elude these ceremonies, for no young lady can marry without the pastor's certificate of confirmation and Lord's Supper, and no young man can obtain his passport for foreign travel without the same: and thus, in point of fact, these sacred institutions are considered as mere forms of law. This throws also much business and responsibility into the pastor's hands, which begins with the birth of every individual in his parish, of which he has to report not only the day, but the hour—rather a difficult proceeding, considering the peasants have no clocks. It consequently happens that peasant-children are invariably born at sunrise, noon, or sunset; a circumstance which has given rise to inquiries in some over-zealous understrappers why it is that the peasant ladies bless their lords at these three periods of the day, and no other!

The clergy, of which there is only one order, is here ordained by three fellow-pastors—the livings being in the gift of the landed proprietors of the Kirchspiel, before whom, like many of our dissenters, the various candidates preach for preference, and are elected according to their happy choice of a sermon. Altogether the form of religion here established is as inefficient and unsound as might be expected from its present utter political insignificance and past troublous history, which, as affecting both upper and lower classes most importantly, possesses much interest.

In ancient times the Estonians worshipped almost as many gods as there were objects in nature and aims in life. They had gods of the sun and moon, gods of fishing and hunting, gods of good harvests, and gods of good jour-

neys: at the same time, agreeably to the theology of all nations, they had a superior and invisible deity called *Jummal*, which name was transferred to the God of Christianity, and has descended to the present day—*Jummal aga*, or God be with you, being the universal mode of salutation and farewell, and the first distinct sentence a stranger retains among the quick babble of their gentle language. The primeval attempts to win them over from idolatry were accompanied with great selfishness and cruelty. The Danes were the first to disgust them with the equivocal blessings of their mode of Christianity, and it is no wonder that the simple idolaters had as little relish for the unexplained God of their invaders as for the heavy tribute by which they announced his presence. Contented with their unexpensive deities of forest and dell, they resisted to the utmost; only declaring themselves converts after their huts were razed, their land plundered, and their best hunters slain; relapsing the moment their new brethren's backs were turned, and revenging themselves by daring piracies in the Gulf and retorts of a more positive nature upon the coast of Denmark. Again and again did the Danes return to enforce the dreaded punishment of Christianity, and compel the unwilling flock to a blood-stained fold; carrying off even children as hostages for the parents' continuance in the profession of Christianity: till, growing cunning with oppression, the Estonians not unfrequently held out the voluntary endurance of baptism as a bribe, gaining time whilst thus employed for a stronger party to fall upon their persecutors with more deadly effect. At length in 1170 the Danes bethought themselves of appointing a bishop, by name Fulko, in Estonia, or, according to other accounts, a legate from Pope Alexander III. But the whole embryo diocese mutinied, and Fulko is believed never to have put foot on Estonian soil. For the proposed affront also the Estonians revenged themselves by breaking into Sweden, laying waste the bishopric, and murdering the bishop, of Upsala. Aided, however, by the Livonians on the opposite side, then under the dominion of the *Schwertbrüder*—an order of Livonian knights—the Danes at length established their power, and the Estonians, thus between two fires, were fain to submit to the yoke of several Roman Catholic bishops, whose residences, of which many ruins still remain—one with the significant name of *Feafeuer*, or Purgatory—were the first fortresses erected in the land, and who enforced their persuasions by well-armed garrisons. All liberty was now over with the poor Estonians. To these sees were added convents and monasteries, and the whole catalogue of extortion, rapacity, and crime of the papal dominion, here seen in stronger colours from the utter want of civilization. The motto of each superior was to wrest all he could, and keep as he best might: and soon the bishops, and their allies the knights, fell out; and it not unfrequently happened that, returning from helping or spoiling a fellow-prelate, or from telling a tale of complaint at the court of Rome, the bishop had the mortification of finding his castle plundered and burnt, or the standard of the order floating from its towers, while the knights snapped their fingers at the papal bull, for Rome was a long way off, and the diocesans were very indifferent about the matter as long as they had no heavier tribute to pay.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Estonians did not progress in religious knowledge; being very alert in purchasing indulgences at small prices on St. Peter's Eve and St. John's Eve, but in secret returning to the gods of their forefathers by many a secluded rock or lonely lake. The religion of the higher classes we need not inquire into, or we might be tempted to prefer the simple hind, who was made the beast of burden both of clergy and laity, and who in his idolatry had at all events the sentiment of antiquity on his side.

Meanwhile time was advancing, and as early as 1524 the new doctrines of Luther first began to be known. Fortunately at this time the Master of the Order, under which Estonia and Livonia were now united, was one Walter von Plettenberg, afterwards Prince of

the German Empire, an enlightened man, who endeavoured to mitigate the condition of the peasants, and wring some humane ordinances from their masters. He was himself favourable to the creed, and it spread rapidly among the lower orders; not, however, from any conviction of the superiority of this new form of worship, but from an utter and constantly maintained indifference to the old, and an apathy to all inquiry arising from their helpless state of servitude. The Reformation in Estonia was conducted without any signal disturbance; some of the Catholic bishops squared their consciences to the times; others were fortunate enough to sell their bishopries to the King of Sweden; while others, who resisted, had their claims treated with forbearance. Some time, however, elapsed before the peasantry reaped any benefit. Preachers of the new religion were there, but generally unacquainted with the Estonian language, and, when pastors better versed arose, the poor serfs soon discovered that the old enemy had only returned under a new face; religious instruction was as far from them as ever; the pastors led most disreputable lives, spending their days in journeying from one jovial table to another, and were elected by the *Landes Adel*, or nobility of the land, who held then, as they do now, the church property in their hands, without any reference to previous study or capacity. Meanwhile alternate civil war and pestilence drove even these from their abodes, and the serf's condition was more miserable than ever. It is true Luther sent a pastor to Reval with a letter of recommendation written by himself and Melancthon, which still exists in the church archives; but Reval was a distinct colony, and had no influence beyond its walls. As late even as 1654 some peasants endeavoured to revive the worship of their ancient deities; and their old pagan sabbath, the Thursday, is still held holy by many.

In short—for I think you must tire of my lamentable church history—not until Estonia was safely gathered under the Russian sceptre was there any regular succession of church ministry: since when, the establishment, such as it is, has been maintained in outward peace and order; the peasants have been instructed, and are become the zealous church-goers I describe. So much for the peasantry.

But now, if we look at the higher classes, we find them exactly in that relation to an insignificant, poverty-stricken church, whose ministers are as much beneath them in birth as in income, as might be expected. The pastors are respected as exercising a wholesome restraint over the lower orders, of which the upper ones reap the social benefit, are received with a proud kind of condescension at the table of the Count or Baron; and in their turn forbear all remonstrance against the widely spreading rationalism which infects the nobility, and of which in truth they themselves, in the capacity of family tutors, are too frequently the instillers. Upon the whole, here seems as great a need for the introduction of Christianity as ever; and, could Luther rise from his grave, he would find the Bible as strictly banished from this portion of a community professing his doctrines as in the worst times of papal policy. Thus it is that the Lutheran religion, as established in these provinces, is a standing memorial of a reformation which, in its hurry to throw off the errors of the old system, has sacrificed also its truths, and a glaring instance of the inefficiency of a church unendowed with wealth, consequence, or dignity, among a class where such qualities are held in high estimation—and where are they not? For to what else can we attribute an indifference on the subject of revealed religion in a country which can as little boast a philosopher as it can a martyr?

But to return to the peasant. Beyond his strict adherence to his church we can find but little interesting in his character; nor indeed is it fair to look for any, excepting perhaps that of servile obedience or cunning evasion, among a people so long oppressed as the Estonian. How far, however, the influence of external circumstance is

answerable for this is fully proved by the two distinct aspects which are to be found among the peasantry. On those estates—including unfortunately by far the greater part of the province—which suffer a constant exchange of proprietors, and where no feelings of attachment between master and peasant have time to take root, or where feelings of an opposite nature are engendered by harsh and arbitrary treatment, we find the peasant a dull brute indeed; insensible to a kindness he mistrusts—careless of improvement—improvident as the Irishman, without his wit—and phlegmatic as the German, without his industry. Rather than work beyond the minimum of his necessary *Corvéage*, he will starve. Provided he can have a pipe in his mouth, and lie sleeping at the bottom of his cart, while his patient wife drives the willing little rough horse, or, what is more frequent, while the latter will go right of itself, he cares little about an empty stomach. Offer him wages for his labour, and he will tell you, with the dullest bumpkin look, that if he works more he must eat more; and the fable of the belly and the members has here a different termination to what it had in our young days. On the other hand, on those few estates which have been occupied for several generations by the same family, the peasants appear invariably an active, industrious, and prosperous set—attached to their lord, and ingenious in various trades. So much for the law of primogeniture—a doctrine here hardly better understood than the apostolic succession. But what can a people know of real independence, living thus twofold under foreign subjection? In his very crimes the Estonian is a coward; he seldom gets beyond pilfering, and here makes a curious distinction—regarding it as no crime to steal that which cannot squeak or bleat in its own defence. Thus a pig or a sheep would be the height of iniquity, while a *Kummet* of corn or an *Eimer* of brandy are very venial sins. Other crimes he has few, and murder is unknown. The penal list of this last year offers only eighty-seven misdemeanors in a population of above three hundred thousand peasants, and five of these consist merely in travelling without a passport. In this respect also the Estonian's conscience is so tender that the legislature allows no punishment to be enforced till a voluntary confession has been made—well knowing that no Estonian can be long without making a clean breast. Not so his lofty and lively neighbour, the Russian, whose legislature might whistle for his voluntary confession. Serf though he be, he is a very Saracen in independence; and his list of crimes would make a wild Newgate Calendar. The same conscientiousness, however, which opens the Estonian's heart under sense of delinquency, steels it in moments of danger. No soldier in the Russian army stands a charge better than the contemned *Tchuchonn*. But now I have kept you standing long enough in the cold church, and the obsequious *Küster*, or clerk, wonders what we can be about—and in truth I am weary also.

LETTER THE TENTH.

Similarity between old England and Estonia—Frequent transfer of estates—The *Credit-Casse*—History of M. de Berg—The *Ritterschaft*—The *Land-Tag*—Preparations for removal to Reval—Winter travelling costume of a child—Journey—Reval.

Before my acquaintance with Estonia commenced, I had in my ignorance imagined the love and habit of a country residence to be exclusively confined to our own favoured land, where a sturdy race, attached to the pleasures of the country, and scorning the dissipation and dependence of the court and capital, has ever existed. France has no country gentlemen—Germany none—Italy none. It is therefore the more pleasing to see the life of our old-fashioned country gentry somewhat imaged in that of the present Estonian noblesse; the same attention to agricultural pursuits—the same local importance—the same discharge of the magisterial duties which a country life imposes—and the same hospitality to all around them; equally as brave when their bravery is required, equally as slothful while peaceful occasion permits. If we could but add attachment to a church, the right of primogeniture, and a sense of independence—the three primary colours, it is true, of this picture—the likeness would be complete. Perhaps a habit of grumbling at the government might be quoted as another item of similarity—the peg whereon the Estonians hang their yet well-lined, but somewhat threadbare nationality. For, though the Russian sceptre is the first under which they have enjoyed the blessings of peace and order, yet a regular catalogue of prosy murmurs is indulged in, which must be considered rather as a welcome topic in a somewhat barren field of conversation than as any symptom of disaffection, for no subjects in the empire have proved themselves more brave and loyal when put to the test.

The province of Estonia is divided into about six hundred estates, where the sin of absenteeism is rare, for the landholder generally lives on his own property, and devotes himself to its superintendence. In old times this was little more than nominal; wants were fewer, the population scantier, and competition unknown; and frequently the landholder let one-half of his estate lie fallow or unredeemed—a custom not quite obsolete yet—fully satisfied with the ample return of the rest. Now, however, an increasing plentifulness of money having brought down the rate of interest, and the introduction of new systems having excited a slight degree of competition, woods are stumped up—new land cleared—the peasantry, who are much more ignorant of their own rights than their masters, drained of their resources, or, if the estate be in more enlightened hands, extra labour is engaged for wages; while some of the younger nobility, who have travelled to their own profit, are slowly recurring to the aid of science to supply the deficiency of hands. One evil, however, attending this increased activity is the incessant transfer of estates I have alluded to. Money cannot circulate through too many hands for the public good, nor land through too few; therefore, the barter of these immense estates—some of them embracing as much as a hundred square miles of territory, which is looked upon in the light of a speculation in which all are eager to engage, and for which but few possess the necessary capital—is a great disadvantage to the classes beneath them, and a very questionable benefit to their own. For at best, if the estate prove profitable and the debts incurred on it be defrayed,

the death of the proprietor, and the necessity of dividing the property, throw it again into the market. It cannot be said, however, that the wholesome system of a monopoly of land is wholly unknown, for about three entailed estates, *Majorats Güter*, as they are called, exist in Estonia, and with manifest advantage to the families themselves, and to every class of peasantry upon them.

The emperor—who doubtless foresees the hopelessness of rearing a middle class, or of reforming the higher, until the waste branches of a most prolific nobility be forced into a more active sphere, and all the strength and consequence of the family thrown into one leading head—is greatly in favour of entailed estates; and report speaks of a new and higher patent of nobility projected for those whose means and good sense may equally induce them to found these strongholds of national prosperity. And, being in his imperial person greatly the gainer by this incessant shifting of land—for on each fresh purchase of an estate a tax amounting to four per cent. upon the whole sum paid, called a *Poschlin*, reverts to the crown—there can be no question of the disinterestedness of his majesty's desire. In order to evade this tax, estates were formerly pledged for the term of ninety-nine years; but this subterfuge is now only availing for nine years, not renewable, at the expiration of which, unless the sale be ratified and his majesty's *Poschlin* discharged, the contract is considered void.

An interesting instance of this kind occurred recently here. A widow and four children, left in circumstances unusually limited, were reduced to the necessity of selling a favourite estate which their family had occupied for centuries, and, furthermore, at a time most disadvantageous for the sale of landed property. Through successive years and alternations of fortune, the remembrance of their dearly-loved home was cherished, as of a paradise, whence poverty, not sin, had driven them. At the expiration of nine years the purchaser, a strange opinionated man, was warned to pay his *Poschlin*; a tenth elapsed, and an eleventh began, when government interfered, the trustees of the family stepped forward, and the lone widow, whose worldly circumstances had prospered in the interim, and her children, now grown to man and woman's estate, resumed their family residence with feelings not to be described.

In consequence of a great depression of the agricultural interest—for Estonia has known her years of panic as well as ourselves—and the absence of the necessary capital to weather these bad times, the market was at one time absolutely drugged with a number of noble estates, which went begging for purchasers. To counteract an evil which threatened the stability of the whole province, a bank was formed, which, assisted by a loan from government, advanced money in the form of a mortgage, at five per cent., to every needy landholder. This plan was attended with such distinguished benefit to the country, that soon the *Credit-Casse*, as it is termed, had claims upon almost every estate in the province, and itself bought up those estates which otherwise might have fallen, at one-third of their value, into the hands of adventurers or foreigners. In most cases the mortgage is still retained, as allowing the command of a surplus capital to improve the estate, or otherwise to speculate with, and also as offering a facility of sale. Meanwhile the bank itself has proved a most prosperous undertaking; and thus, holding every estate more or less in its grasp, presents a centre of stability which no casual bad season can overthrow. More than once has it been most severely tried, especially under the government of the late Emperor Alexander, who advanced it a million of silver roubles, at a time when the current value of this coin did not exceed two roubles paper; engaging his imperial word that on repayment the silver rouble should be accepted at the same rate of value. In a few years the silver rouble mounted to four roubles paper, when, to the consternation of the Credit-Casse, the government exacted full value. The *Ritterschaft* tried every measure to obtain justice—was referred from the

sovereign to the minister, from the minister to the senate—and at length dismissed with the admonition of having "carried their petition to impertinence," and Estonia was obliged to pay.

This excellent institution was mainly suggested and founded by an individual to whom a strange course of misfortune has since given an additional celebrity. M. de Berg was a noble of large landed property, high in repute, and holding some of the chief offices of the province. Being on a visit to Petersburg, this gentleman was requested by a merchant there, carrying on a considerable business with Reval in the brandy trade, to take charge of a very large sum due to a house at Reval. To this he assented, and left Petersburg with the money in his possession. Arriving in Reval, upon application being made by the creditor, M. Berg, to the astonishment of all parties, simply and solemnly averred that the sum in question was no longer in his hands, and that, though his utter ruin and disgrace must ensue, nothing should induce him to account for its disappearance. The news of this most strange declaration from one of her most trusted members burst like a thunderclap through the province, and such was the horror felt by his fellow nobles that the money was replaced in a few hours. Time was allowed him, and the persuasions of his family and friends resorted to, to elicit the truth; but he merely repeated the same tale, acknowledged his position in its full light, and was otherwise silent. The sale of his fine estates now followed—his name was struck off the roll of matriculated nobility—himself degraded from all his posts, and reduced with his family to the utmost indigence. This happened thirty years ago, and the individual in question, now just eighty years of age, having never deviated from the course of rectitude which characterized him before his disgrace, has gradually regained the esteem and confidence of his fellow-nobility. But the mystery which cost him so dear remains with him, nor will it be disclosed until after his death.

The Ritterschaft, or senate, consists of the collected matriculated nobility of this province—each landholder among them having a vote—at the head of whom is a dignitary elected by the body, called the *Ritterschafts-Hauptmann*, or, as it is termed in French, *le Maréchal de la Noblesse*—an office of great antiquity—whose functions continue for three years, and consist in maintaining the rights of the body, in presenting petitions to the crown, and in entering into contracts with the same for the sale of their home commodities, which, such as brandy and corn, are bought up by the crown itself, &c. To hear therefore a statement of his administration, to receive the resignation of the old Ritterschafts-Hauptmann, and to place the staff of honour in the hands of a new one elected from among themselves—to fill up the gap which death may have occasioned in a body of twelve judges, called *Land Räthe*, whose office is for life—to reappoint the eleven *Hakenrichters*, an active magistracy for the different districts of Estonia, also renewable every three years,—in short, to attend to a vast number of matters connected with their internal administration,—a so-called *Land-Tag* (a miniature representation of the ancient German *Reich's Tag*, where princes and bishops of the empire presided, and sovereigns were elected) is held triennially in the month of February in Reval. On this occasion all the nobility flock thither, and the little capital becomes the centre equally of amusement and business. The present February bringing with it a recurrence of this Land-Tag, we all prepared to remove to Reval.

These removals are no slight undertakings. Provision has to be taken for those who go, and provision portioned out for those who stay. The hayloft, the cellar, the larder, and the dairy have all to be transported, and the wardrobe, important as it may be, becomes a very minor consideration. Therefore, peasants with well-stored carts are sent beforehand to creep at a snail's pace to Reval; servants that can be spared are despatched to make all ready; and lastly, the *Herrschaft*, or family of the seigneur, prepare to follow.

On the evening of the 20th of February, N.S., all the juvenile portion of the family were consigned to rest at an earlier hour than usual, and by six o'clock the next morning little eyes were wide awake, and little limbs in full motion, by the flickering candle's light—in everybody's way as long as they were not wanted, and nowhere to be found when they were. At length the little flock were all assembled, and, having been well lined inside by a migratory kind of breakfast, the outer process began. This is conducted somewhat on the same principle as the building of a house—the foundations being filled with rather rubbishy materials, over which a firm structure is reared. First came a large cotton handkerchief—then a pelisse, three years too short—then a faded comfortable of papa's, and then an old cachemire of mamma's, which latter was with difficulty forced under the vanishing arms and tied firmly behind. Now each tiny hand was carefully sealed with as many pairs of gloves as could be gathered together for the occasion, —one hand (for the nursemaids are not very particular) being not seldom more richly endowed in this respect than its fellow. The same process is applied to the little feet, which swell to misshapen stumps beneath an accumulation of under-socks and over-socks, under-shoes and over-boots, and are finally swallowed up in huge worsted stockings, which embrace all the drawers, short petticoats, ends of handkerchiefs, comfortables, and shawls they can reach, and are generally gartered in some incomprehensible fashion round the waist. But mark! this is only the foundation. Now comes the thickly-wadded winter pelisse, of silk or merinos, with bands and ligatures which instantly bury themselves in the depths of the surrounding hillocks, till within the case of clothes before you, which stands like a roll-pudding tied up ready for the boiler, no one would suspect the slender skipping sprite that your little finger can lift with ease. And lastly, all this is enveloped in the little jaunty silk cloak, which fastens readily enough round the neck on ordinary occasions, but now refuses to meet by the breadth of a hand, and is made secure by a worsted boa of every bright colour.

Is this all? No—wait. I have forgotten the pretty clustering locked head, and rosy dimpled face; and in truth they were so lost in the mountains of wool and wadding around as to be fairly overlooked. Here a handkerchief is bound round the forehead, and another down each cheek, just skirting the nose, and allowing a small triangular space for sight and respiration—talking had better not be attempted—while the head is roofed in by a wadded hat—a misshapen machine with soft crown and bangled peak, which can't be hurt, and never looks in order, over which are suspended as many veils—green, white, and black—as mamma's cast-off stores can furnish, through which the brightest little pair of eyes in the world faintly twinkle like stars through a mist. And now one touch upsets the whole mass, and a man-servant coolly lifts it up in his arms like a bale of goods, and carries it off to the sledge.

It was a lovely morning as we started with our little monstrosities—ourselves in a commodious covered sledge—various satellites of the family in a second, followed up by rougher vehicles, covered with bright worsted rugs, and driven by the different grades of servants, wherein sat the muffled and closely-draped lady's-maids and housemaids of the establishment—not to forget the seigneur himself, who, wrapped to the ears, sat in solitude, driving a high-mettled animal, upon a sledge so small as to be entirely concealed by his person, so that to all appearance he seemed to be gliding away upon his own baronial base, and only attached to the horse by the reins in his well-guarded hands.

The way led through noble woods of Scotch and spruce fir, sometimes catching sight of a lofty mansion of stone, or passing a low thatched building of wood with numberless little sash-windows, where some of the nobles still reside, and which are the remnants of more simple times. And now "the sun rose clear o'er trackless fields of snow," and our solitary procession

jingled merrily on, while, yielding to the lulling sounds of the bells, our little breathing bundles sank motionless and warm into our laps, and retrieved in happy slumbers the early *escapades* of the day. There is no such a warming-pan on a cold winter's journey as a lovely soft child.

After driving thirty wersts we stopped at the half-way house of an acquaintance, for here the willing hospitality of some brother-noble is often substituted for the miserable road-side accommodations. This was one of those wooden houses I have mentioned, and infinitely more pleasing within than without—divided with partitions like the tray of a work-box, and fitted up with every accommodation on a small scale:—a retreat which some unambitious pair might prefer to the palace we had quitted. After a few hours' rest we started again with the same horses, which here perform journeys of sixty wersts in the day with the utmost ease; and when evening was far advanced our little travellers pushed aside their many-coloured veils, and peeped at the lamps with astonished eyes, as we clattered up the steep hill which led to our residence in Reval.

LETTER THE ELEVENTH.

Sudden transformation in the outer man—Humours of the Land-Tag—Society in Reval—Peculiar formality—Facility of divorce—Early marriages—Baroness J.—Mademoiselle de P.—M. de G.—Mademoiselle de V.—Count M.—Baron C.—Beauty of Estonian women—General reading—The *Adeliche* and the *Bürgerliche*—Theatre—Griseldis.

It is astonishing the transformation which this removal to town produces upon the outer man. The good, busy, housekeeping soul settles into the modern woman of fashion; the dressing-gowned slippered country gentleman brushes up into the modern man of the world, and calls and balls, theatre and club-house, replace the quiet routine of the country life. The equipages undergo the same change. The smart town sledge, an open vehicle of graceful form, stands at our door. The horses have exchanged their rusty leather trappings for glossy suits of harness, studded with bright plates of brass or silver. The coachman has doffed his coat of friar's grey for one of bishop's purple, confined by a silken belt of rainbow dyes which many a slenderer waist might envy, and surmounted by a scarlet cloth, or black beaver cap with silver tassel and band; while the little postilion, hitherto a bare-legged stable-boy, sits proudly on the foremost pair, a perfect miniature of the same. Four horses a-breast are no longer seen, for the ancient narrow streets of Reval refuse to admit so broad a phalanx, and, excepting at the hill-gate, all travelling equipages on entering the town are obliged to unharness one of their number.

And now came the morning calls, and the new faces, and the long names, while, as the first act of duty, we paid our homages to the governor and his lady at the castle, who king and queen it in little Reval. And then followed the invitations, seldom given more than two or three days beforehand, and the morning and evening engagements,—for the two o'clock dinner-party is quite distinct from the evening amusement. At the former the business of the Land-Tag is discussed, with observations on the late Ritterschafts-Hauptmann, and conjectures as to his successor, with reports of some new and beneficial measure, and energetic denunciations of some insidious Russian innovation, intermixed with humorous accounts of the blunder of one member, or the break-down of another,—or how some young noble, never before supposed to wear a tongue, had spoken very much to the purpose,—or how some old noble, never before supposed to wear a heart, had shed tears of patriotic emotion.

The chief houses which receive in Reval are, foremost, the Castle of the Governor, where a universal and constant hospitality is maintained; the house of Count Heiden, port-admiral of Reval, of Navarino celebrity, an honest old Dutchman, speaking English perfectly well, and with all the frankness of the English navy; Baroness Üxküll's, and Baron Stackelberg's. These all regularly light their magnificent saloons and throw open their doors once a-week; while invitations on these occasions are passed round by word of mouth, and not by any printed form. All here are upon a perfect equality; rich and poor; so that they be but *noble*—are bidden alike, and no creditor and debtor account kept between those who invite and those who accept. Altogether the kindest feeling pervades the whole body of nobility, who are all known and many related to each other. Ostentation and competition for fashion are unheard of, though the strictest fashion is observed

in dress and entertainments; all parties are conducted with easy courtesy and simplicity; and, were it not for the freezing system of separation and formality which pervades the members of the society itself, and which unfortunately has not been left behind them in the country, Reval would be more attractive than many a capital ten times its size. But a spell seems to hang over both man and woman: the best elements of society are at their disposal —splendid rooms—excellent lighting —throngs of attendants — charming music—and the choicest of refreshments: but the gentlemen occupy several apartments with their thronged card-tables, and the ladies sit, stand, or walk about the rest, and, though all imbued with the very spirit of courtesy and good humour, it must be owned, get at length a little tired of one another's company. Or, if sufficient gentlemen can be seduced from the whist or boston tables to form a dance, the cavalier abstains from fetching his lady till the moment the music begins, and remorselessly casts her off the moment it finishes, leaving her to thread her timid way through files of company to the distant corner where her chaperon is seated, and, once free, never approaches her again. Which party is in fault? It is hard to suppose that Estonia's sons are either "so good or so cold" as not to care for the society of a fair and agreeable woman; and it is equally unjust to asperse her daughters with having wearied them of that which they have so little opportunity of bestowing. The ladies impugn the gentlemen, who, to speak candidly, show no desire to break through these imaginary boundaries, for, if but two meet in the same room, they invariably sit together, or walk together, or smoke together, or in some such way illustrate their principles of strict decorum;—though instances have occurred of an individual who, betrayed singly into the ladies' camp, with no resource but to make the best of it, has exerted so much philosophy as to deceive them into a belief of his having enjoyed their company. The gentlemen at the same time throw the blame upon the lady, who, though easy, courteous, and communicative to her own sex, immediately acts on the defensive as a gentleman approaches, and endeavours by every tacit means to proclaim that she is inaccessibly honest, while, as he has no intention of disputing the fact, the gentleman retires rather than encounter barricades so unsuited to the occasion, and is in no hurry to renew the attempt. "How can a woman be approached," said a shrewd travelled Estonian to me, "who carries *sa vertu* in large letters about her? Our ladies mistake the matter: there's as little need for them to wear this outwardly in society as for your Queen to wear her crown."

But while they are disputing the point the impartial looker-on can only bear witness that in the present state of things the fault seems pretty equal, though of the original delinquents no doubt can remain; for no aspect of society, however perverted or however depraved, should undermine the firm belief that woman, both immediately and ultimately, is its arbitress and lawgiver. Woman is the priestess of that holy temple, home. She it is who throws its gates open and bids man enter—not *vice versâ*; and hers is the high calling to influence his conduct whilst there. It may be difficult to stem those habits which the errors of a grandmother generation have bequeathed, but this does not invalidate the first principle.

Another social evil of far more vital importance, and which seems strangely inconsistent with the strict separation of the two sexes in society, is the facility of divorce under the Lutheran church law. Besides the various other reasons, an incompatibility of temper and mutually avowed dislike are here admitted as sufficient grounds for severing those whom "no man may sunder;" and it is a melancholy proof, to say no worse, of the inexpedience of this law, and its direct tendency to discourage all salutary self-control and forbearance, that divorces are seldom here obtained for any graver reason. Several wretched instances could be quoted, within the sphere of my own knowledge, of parties thus severed for trivial causes, who im-

pugned the tie for that which lay in their own wilful natures, and hastily loosened the one instead of controlling the other; but who, sobered and punished by time, have cursed their second thoughtless act more than they did their first. But it would be little interesting to detail those miseries which selfish man and unwise woman entail on themselves and all connected with them, since, however differently the law may favour or check, such, unfortunately, are peculiar to no country. The heart alone knoweth its own bitterness; but there are sorrows invested with the poetry of imagination, the luxury of melancholy, or the holiness of resignation—sorrows the most real, and yet the most palatable. The disappointed affections hug their own griefs with jealous exclusiveness—the bereaved mother or wife loves her sorrow as she did its object; each mourns as those who "have reason to be fond of grief:" but who finds a melancholy charm in those vexations which arise from awkward tempers, awkward manners, and the thousand needless perversities with which mankind voluntarily flagellate themselves? who sees any poetic beauty in those accumulated molehills of self-created cares of which human nature, cursed in its own choice, at length makes mountains never to be o'erpassed? And the evils resulting from these froward, untangible causes are immeasurably more unbearable than those direct inflictions of Providence which find an affinity with the soul. Those who rail at poetry and refinement as superfluous ingredients in every-day happiness little know what main props they would undermine. These will abide when principles waver:—these open the heart and close the lips intuitively at the right time:—these prevent when all the good institutions in the world could not remedy. Manly delicacy is as necessary in family life as manly rectitude, and womanly tact as womanly virtue. There is as much happiness wrecked from the absence of the one as of the other—and perhaps more. Those who neglect the varnishes of life commit an insidious sin towards themselves; and these lie in the mind, and not, as sometimes supposed, in the purse.

To this laxity of church law may also in great measure be ascribed the prejudicial system of early marriages in Estonia—for vows that can be easily renounced will be also lightly taken. In old times marriages were frequently contracted on the woman's side as early as at fourteen years of age; and a grandmother of thirty was no rare occurrence. In Russia the same custom prevailed; but now, by the Greek church law, no woman can marry until turned seventeen. In Estonia, however, marriages of sixteen still frequently occur,—a circumstance which may be assigned as one reason for the languor and insipidity of the general society. With all her energies cast into one anxious channel by the duties of a family—with her health generally undermined, and all improvement and self-knowledge effectually arrested—thrown into a position in society for which her age and girlish diffidence equally unfit her, and perhaps with the fear of a criticising spouse before her eyes—the tender Estonian matron, with no confidence either in her own powers or her own resources, hopes to screen all deficiencies behind the strictest observance of punctilio, and rests her pretensions to consideration upon the scrupulous fulfilment of the law.

Another drawback to society consequent on this system is, that these timid leaders, these juvenile elders, not content with bringing dulness in their own persons, rigorously exact it from others, and are generally much more censorious than older matrons upon those of their own sex who venture to be livelier, or wiser, or to have seen more of the world without marriage than they have with it. On this account any clever girl with more wit or sense than her fellows had better look about her ere she venture to evince it; for Reval, like other small towns, lacks not of those "idle moths" of both sexes "who eat an honest name;" and wrong terms are given to innocent actions, and double meanings to innocent words; and many a fair creature is left a standing warning to others of the Spartan

rigour of the Estonian gentlemen towards those who are so heedless as to show character before they have secured an establishment. For this reason the proprieties of a soirée are only occasionally enlivened by a more animated *Frau* or a less cautious *Fräulein*, who, having passed the age of hope, here a very limited one, dares now openly to display the liveliness which has cost her so dear; while the young ladies, most wise in seeming most dull, seldom venture beyond the commonplace.

Among these former the most conspicuous are the Baroness J., who in every party gathers a crowd of delighted listeners about her—amusing the old gentlemen with her wit, reproving the young fops with her satire, and charming all with her good sense; Madlle. de P., whose nature is the happiest union of poetry, pleasantry, and feeling, who delights in old romance and lore, and knows more of the history and tradition of her own country than any other of its children; and Madlle. de V., with eyes like planets, and a fascination of manners and person—a *je ne sais quoi*—which no one can resist, who shrugs the loveliest shoulders in the world, and prettily disclaims all talent and learning, but utters sentiments more apposite than any school could teach.

And among the gentlemen who weave a few bright colours into this sober-coloured web, whose natural wit, or love of easy praise, or good sense, or vanity, lead them to forsake the beaten path and venture into more pleasant ways, may be reckoned M. de G., who goes about with cynical looks and merry conceits, and makes more debts than he can pay, and more puns than can be repeated, and has reason to love his wit, for it has stood him in the stead of many a better thing.

And Count M., whose timidity keeps pace with his fancy; who cannot resist making people laugh, but blushes proportionally for having done so; and, unfortunately for himself, is not able to articulate his humorous sayings by proxy, having precisely that species which would lose in any other mouth.

And, lastly, Baron C., who has the shrewdest sense, the liveliest wit, the brightest face, and the loudest laugh in the province. With him wit enters into the very constitution of the man. He revenges his wrongs with a satire, despatches his business with a bon-mot, spends precious sparkling ideas alike on his farming-bailiff and on his brother-noble, alienates his friends for the sake of a pun, captivates his enemies by the same process, and, what is more extraordinary than all, minds the main chance better than any other man in Estonia. Wherever his face appears, dulness is taken by the shoulders and thrust out of doors. His reputation dies and revives with each season: at one time he is branded as the most audacious young scamp living, at another eulogised as the very best fellow in the world, while he, with happy boldness, is equally indifferent to either. Those who determine beforehand not to like him, end by becoming his warmest friends; and those who spoiled him at first, his bitterest enemies. Unincumbered with the slightest portion of mauvaise honte or reserve, no man better understands setting down an inferior, or dictating to a superior.

Under his auspices a band of kindred spirits has been formed, who, coalescing with the whimsical and inventive merriment of their leader, have bound themselves to go about circulating reports of marriage in behalf of despairing damsels—reports of *Korbs* or refusals, in ridicule of arrogant swains —fomenting quarrels or abetting reconciliations wherever it suits their caprice or purpose; and, above all, for this is their chief aim and motive, repairing all awkward flaws of their own characters by *speaking well of each other*. In this respect, however, some of the members, it is said, have so far overshot the intention of the order as to go about speaking well of *themselves*, to the unspeakable glee, as it may be imagined, of their mischievous leader, who, in the rich harvest of mirth which these dauntless contrivances of his merry brain bring in, is doubly delighted when he can levy tribute from any of his own disciples. With such

helps as these, society is made to move at rather a brisker pace, greatly to the scandal of some very demure ladies, whose weak side, however, Baron C., with the confidence of one who possesses equal animal spirits, ready repartee, great tact, and no scruples, promises to undermine.

The Estonian ladies have beautiful complexions and splendid heads of hair, both of which are most carefully tended from their infancy. Their *chevelure* especially is never allowed to be cut from its earliest growth, and the most massive coils of glossy hair, here a universal natural ornament, richly repay this care. The figures of the unmarried women are also fine, though, did it not appear almost hypercritical, I could add that their waists are too slender for beauty. Small and beautifully-formed hands are also a prevailing feature. When dressed at all they are incomparably better dressed, more fashionably, and more *fraiche*, which is a *sine quâ non* here, than our less careful belles, though on common occasions the remark may be reversed. Diamonds and other precious stones are seen in profusion, and no substitute ever appears. The only conspicuous defect is, like the American beauties, a prevalence of bad teeth. Moore's words were constantly recalled to my mind:—

"What pity, blooming girl! that lips so ready for a lover
Should not beneath their ruby casket cover
One tooth of pearl:
But, like a rose beside a churchyard stone,
Be doom'd to blush o'er many a mouldering bone."

This is the more observable because here the lowest peasant can neither speak nor smile without displaying rows of pearls as even as white, while many of the higher classes scarcely relax in expression but at the risk of disclosing ruins of every form and colour.

The general reading of these classes is confined to the lighter works of the day—modern French novels and German translations of our English ones find their way here; while, in curious opposition, the newest German infidelities circulate side by side with Dunallan and other similar evangelical works of our present generation. Bulwer is universally read, and looked upon as the strict standard of English taste and principle; and I am sorry to add that his countrywoman played him false, and thought it her duty to shake these opinions by every fair argument in her power.

It can hardly be said that a pride of nobility is observable among this class, but this rather arises from the absence of all possible collision with those beneath them, and from a happy security of their own power. For the Estonian nobility, having undisputed sway, have established a set of customs and opinions which effectually interdicts all approach between the *Adeliche*, or noble, and the *Bürgerliche*, or commoner, either in society or family connexion. In both these respects the line of demarcation is drawn more strictly than at the present times in Germany. I once proposed to a young Estonian baron, low in fortunes, and by no means indemnified by Nature's gifts, to bestow his hand and title upon the daughter of a merchant in Reval, famed alike for her great beauty, talents, and wealth—assuring him in return of the everlasting gratitude of herself and her relations; but the young baron did not relish the joke, and I found myself on tender ground.

The little German theatre here proves a most agreeable diversion. We engaged a box for the season, and are glad whenever the many hospitable houses leave an evening free. Without attempting too much, the modest German company, most respectable in performance, give us selections from Kotzebue, from Iffland, &c.; but a piece recently dramatized, called Griseldis, is more attractive than all, and draws most sympathising audiences. This is taken from the same old German legend which I conclude furnished our ancient ballad of the patient Griselda, with a slight alteration of the *dénouement*. The drama, however, is laid in the times of our national character, King Arthur.

The hero, Percival, is one of the chief nobles of his court, and the heroine,

Griseldis, has, on account of her beauty and virtue, been taken from a lowly woodman's hut to grace his castle. Knowing his wife to be the very mirror of excellence, Percival leaves her to repair to King Arthur's court, where, taunted by some with her low birth, by others with possessing a diamond which he is afraid to display, he boasts that, though his wife be a woodman's daughter, she surpasses in obedience and every wifely sense of duty all the high-born ladies of the court. This so stings the queen herself, a bad, designing woman, who in vain lays siege to Percival's faith, that she offers to do homage on her knees to this peasant-born countess, and to proclaim her best among women, if her obedience prove superior to every trial; but, if Griseldis fail, exacts the same homage from the haughty Percival to herself. This rouses Percival's vanity, and, confident of his wife's principles, and careless of her sufferings, he accepts the gage. Two courtiers, chosen as witnesses to this conjugal ordeal, now accompany him to his castle. Here an unforeseen occasion for trial immediately presents itself: Griseldis's old mother, on her deathbed, sends a messenger to the castle to summon her daughter, if not grown unmindful in her present exaltation, to come and receive her last blessing. Griseldis sues to Percival for leave to fulfil this act of piety, which Percival, thinking only of his bond, denies, and forbids her to leave the castle—Griseldis obeys. Percival then asks for their only child, a babe in the cradle: "The king wants it," he coolly says, and gives it to the courtiers. "The king want my child!" screams Griseldis, with a mother's agony, and is rushing to seize it from their grasp, when Percival restrains her, and gives her to understand that such is his will. Griseldis obeys. In the next scene he bids the great hall be prepared—calls together his dependants and vassals, and now commands his countess to put off her splendid robes, to unbind the jewels from her hair, and return to his presence in the russet petticoat, loose tresses, and bare feet, with which he first saw her—Griseldis obeys. Now, turning to the assembly, he says, "Thus you saw this woman enter my castle; this was her condition when she became your mistress; to that let her return: conduct her beyond the castle gates, and give her neither food nor shelter, on your allegiance." Griseldis attempts no remonstrance, save her tears; weeping, she bids her lord adieu, passes meekly through the throng, and goes barefooted forth. A storm of thunder and lightning now bursts over the scene, but still she pursues her forlorn way, till torn and exhausted she reaches the home of her girlhood. Here her father, pointing to the dead body of her mother, upbraids her with neglect of filial duty, conveys to her a maternal curse instead of a blessing, and, further incensed by beholding her in this degraded condition, stigmatizes her as the most worthless of women, and drives her from his hut. Now is poor Griseldis poor indeed; overcome with hunger and wretchedness, she lays herself down on a stone to die, which so touches the old man's heart that he consents to receive her. And thus she lives, resuming her hard labour and her hard fare, praying to God for her husband and child, and fading away beneath her griefs. Three months elapse, and Griseldis appears in the same russet garb, pale and wan, when a horn is heard, and the king and the queen and all the court, with Percival in the midst, crowd into the lonely valley. Griseldis looks and listens in speechless amazement as Percival explains how all this suffering has been but a trial of her duty, which having abided the sharpest proof, the queen here falls on her knees and owns her peerless among women. And now Percival, with a face radiant with gratified pride, bids her return to his castle and resume her sway over him and all his possessions. But Griseldis, with an unutterable expression of woe, here lifts up her voice: "Percival, thou art lost to me for ever. God knows that I would have borne humiliation, torture, death in any shape for thy good—that I have suffered grief, degradation, and hardship—have taught my hands again to labour, and have washed my bread with tears at thy bidding without a

complaint. But to know that thou hast wrung thy wife's tenderest feelings, that thou hast loaded my heart with a dying mother's curse, hast turned my raven locks to grey, and taught me in a few months an eternity of misery—and that all this wretchedness has been but to prove my duty to the world—but to gratify thy vanity!—this, this it is that breaks my heart. What is a queen's homage to me when Percival has lost my esteem! Ask me not to return. My mother's spectre would rise between us. I should despise myself for following the weakness of my affection, and thou wouldst despise me for loving one I had ceased to revere. No—ask me not—it cannot be. Let me remain with him who pitied me when I seemed most guilty. Farewell, my Percival; cherish our child, and tell him that his mother died. Come, father"—and so saying, Griseldis resists every solicitation, and, weeping, leaves the scene.

The dénouement is the theme of all conversation, and parties run high for and against its moral. Some little patient Griseldises of the society blame their prototype for not returning, and some selfish Percivals acquit her, and *vice versâ*. I venture no opinion.

Count M. wiped his eyes, and hoped they made it up behind the scenes.

LETTER THE TWELFTH.

Acquirement of Languages—Sascha—Position and local peculiarities of Reval—Its winter beauties—The Domberg—Thermometer twenty-five degrees below zero—Characteristics of intense cold—Characteristics of Count —— —Marriage de Convenance—Lutheran wedding.

THE best souvenir the traveller can carry away of a foreign country, better than journal or sketch-book, is a knowledge of its language. The adaptation between the sounds and the movements, —the idiom and the impulses of a people, are so intimate;—the prevalence of the passionate, the profound, the malleable, or the vigorous, conspicuous in the language so commensurate with that manifested in the character of a nation, that any attempt to decipher the one without the aid of the other would lead to results either barren or false. However philologically interesting to trace in its connexion with other Finnish dialects, or even with those of a Celtic origin, the Estonian language in itself offers no reward for the present, and no promise for the future. And though in my day I shall as little see the Russian language as the Russian people in full exercise or maturity of their energies, yet there is pleasure in studying the character of the child in whom a high and growing destiny is apparent.

In other words, this weighty argument to simple conclusion, this "noisy flourish to puny purpose," is the reason for my devoting the spare minutes of our life of busy idleness to the study of Russian; and further why, from this triune colony of Estonians, Germans, and Russians, who possess Reval, I have thought fit to select an handmaiden of the last-mentioned nation, outwardly to assist in qualifying me for the strict toilette requirements of Reval society, and inwardly to indulge that comfortable feeling, known under varying aspects to all who know themselves, of screening an indulgence beneath the pretext of a task. Upon our arrival, therefore, the establishment was increased by the presence of a rather pretty, and very demure young lady, who, though the daughter of an *unter Offizier*, a name adopted and nasalized in the Russian service, condescends for certain considerations to act as my tire-woman. Towards the other servants, the general circumstance of her Russian birth, as well as the special one of her family elevation, forbids all approach on her side. It is true she speaks not a word of their language, nor of any other save her own; but this is a trifling impediment compared with the disdain with which a Russian of any degree regards the *Tchuchonn*, whose Lutheran faith he would as soon adopt as his *po-Tchuchonski* tongue, and who returns the compliment pretty much in the same coin; for the vilest stigma one Estonian can throw on another, is to say, "Your heart is Russian." In short they asperse and despise one another as much as contiguous nations always do. Under these circumstances, Sascha, for such is the name of my new Russian Grace, has at present rather a lonely life of it; my communications being limited to little more than "nods and becks, and wreathed smiles," and, therefore, excepting an occasional torrent of eloquence with which she indemnifies herself for her silence in the work-room, and inundates her lady-disciple, and where it is well if after the first three words the latter do not find herself out of her depth, she preserves a stateliness and mute dignity highly edifying to the simpler members of the establishment.

How striking it is that the process of learning a language in riper years

should be the same as that of acquiring speech in infancy! The stammerer of a new tongue, like the child first essaying to speak, invariably begins by mastering good, solid, substantial substantives, then a few indispensable adjectives, and the important doctrine of "my and thy." But here succeeds a short pause, for the ever-varying verb is difficult of seizure, and adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, those bonds of connexion, come halting slowly in, and generally in the wrong place. At first it seems folly to suppose that the same treacherous memory which at the commencement can scarce retain six new words a day, should eventually master the requisite thousands: but after a time words beget words, as money begets money. Those there are which, once heard, by some indefinable association are never forgotten, while others are off and on in the memory countless times ere she succeeds in binding them fast. The Russian language, to judge from this stage of process, is not more intricate than the German, though probably the easier for following in the track of such a predecessor. As to the pronunciation, this is a separate thing. No Russian allows that a foreigner can acquire it save from his nurse. Childhood once past, it is as "the desire of the moth for the star;" but to my view, though it may seem a paradoxical assertion, the precise articulation of a language is the least important part. Our lessons usually occur morning and evening, when I sit and clip the emperor's Russian without the slightest remorse, and Sascha either *coiffe's* or *decoiffe's*, and is far less amused at this laceration of her native tongue than the perpetrator herself. For, like the French, the Russians forbid themselves all enjoyment of a foreigner's blunders, a species of ridicule which, dispassionately considered, is the most involuntary, most venial, and least personal existing.

Meanwhile the season by no means impedes our both reconnoitring and recognising the picturesque beauties of Reval, which, in their summer dress, attract many a visitor. Reval itself is divided into two distinct portions, the lower town and the upper, or *Domberg* (Dome-hill), so called from the Dome or cathedral church, which consists in a circular reef of lofty rocks about a mile in circumference, rising like a vast citadel, and is occupied by the castle of the governor and the residences of the nobility—no *Unadeliche*, or not noble, being privileged to possess ground on the aristocratic Domberg. Here the picturesque remains of massive walls and towers which continue the line of elevation to a giddy height, and rival the rocks as much in solidity as in time-worn hue, engross a considerable portion of the outer ring, the remaining segment being possessed by some of the principal mansions, many of them of great magnificence, which start perpendicularly from the rock, in some instances without an inch of space beyond, and offer views soaring wide over land, sea, and sky, and windows whence one shudders to look down. However the landscape may brighten and thicken beneath the influence of summer, it is hardly possible to imagine it more striking than as now seen in its winter drapery from the outer houses of the Domberg. The busy, smoky, snow-roofed town, interspersed with lines of ancient fortifications, and bound in with Gothic walls, towers, and gates; the Lutheran and Russian churches breaking, with their variously formed spires and domes, the line of frozen sea, which "spreads in many a shining league" round two-thirds of the horizon, are the main features of this winter picture; while on the right a steep rocky coast juts boldly through the snow, and in front the modern Russian navy, and, more distant, the ruined convent of a different period and people, rear their shapes in lines of frost.

The Domberg possesses two outlets; the one through a massive low tower and over a sloping angular bridge, a quarter of a werst in length, which unites it with the flat country side; the other a precipitous descent between two high walls, of evident artificial formation, terminated suddenly by a high tower, through the narrow archway of which all passage to and from the town

occurs: and theatre, club-house, and other attractions being below, and much business and no shops above, the traffic through this slender port-hole is very considerable. Nor is it unattended with danger; for, with the steepness and acceleration of the descent, all equipages here obtain an impetus equally hazardous and difficult to arrest. The narrowness of the path itself, which furthermore takes an awkward curve beneath the very archway, allows only space for one vehicle; while the ends of three of the most frequented streets in the lower town, concentering at this point, draw together a population which greatly multiplies the chances of dangerous collision. To obviate this, all postilions and coachmen descending the hill are bound to give notice of their approach by a loud whoop, which a sentinel stationed in the archway repeats with all his strength for the benefit of those approaching from the town, who consequently draw up till the swiftly-propelled machine is safely passed. A neglect of such precautions has led to terrible accidents, and I cannot say that I ever approach the gateway on either side without a slight nervous twinge. Descending, every precaution is used to check the speed of the horses; but ascending, the reins are abandoned to them, and no sooner do the intelligent animals descry the fatal archway than they accelerate their speed, dash boldly at a difficulty which can only thus be overcome, and scaling the eminence with all their strength, with their plunging hoofs high above your head, scatter clouds of dust, mud, or snow, according to the season, behind them. I need hardly add that our residence is included in this *galerie noble*, so difficult of access, and which tries equally the strength of our lungs as that of our beautiful horses: for, greatly to the wonder of the neighbourhood, who are far more sensitive to their own climate's inclemencies than our more southern-nurtured selves, we generally profit by this unremittingly fine weather to take pedestrian exercise.

At this present date, however, our walks and gaieties are equally checked by a visitation of the severest weather this winter has hitherto brought. Returning from a drive in an open sledge the air struck us as most unbreathably cutting, and upon inspection the thermometer was found at 12° below zero. —Before night it fell to 25°, where it has since remained pretty stationary; while a sun, in a sky maliciously serene, shines cloudless from morn till night, and then abdicates this snow landscape and frozen ocean to a moon, soft, full, clear, and yellow, with not a breath of halo betwixt its bright edge and the deep, deep sky.

It is remarkable that when the atmosphere without averages 10° Fahrenheit, a temperature of 64° indoors is ample for comfort; but when the outer cold sharpens to 20° below zero and downwards, not even a heat of 70° in the rooms will keep the person sufficiently warm. We walk, nevertheless, in moderation, and in order to spare servants and horses, who at such seasons are great sufferers for the pleasures of their Herrschaft, abstain as much as possible from evening amusements. These are most unsocial expeditions, for no more air is admitted to the face than is necessary for the tightened respiration, and no more light to the eyes than to guide you on your way; while in the walking bear or wolf who stalks past you, the roof of his fur cap meeting the fence of his fur collar, and nothing visible of the "human face divine" but the sharp end of a very red nose, no one would recognise their nearest relative. The first perception on issuing into the congealed air is the immediate stiffening of your nostrils and weighting of your eyelashes, while any little unguarded isthmus between sleeve and glove, or strip of territory just above the double fur boots, feels instantly as if grasped by a cold wet hand; and by the time you have walked a hundred yards you are generally so chilled, that, though you hug your *Pelz*, or fur cloak, double over your person, an irrefutable sensation tells you that, in spite of positive demonstration to the contrary, it is blown wide open. No rude wind, however, is to be apprehended on such occasions,

for intense cold is here accompanied by perfect stillness of the air. Difficult as it may be to promote circulation under ordinary movement in such an atmosphere, there is nevertheless a peculiar pleasure in braving its utmost pinch—in sallying out behind a barricade of furs, and hearing the snow crisp and creak beneath your footsteps, with the comfortable conviction that where neither warmth nor wet exists, neither dirt nor corruption can assail the senses. The descent, half running, half walking, of the Domberg is agreeable enough, but the ascent might be objected to as rather too bracing.

This accession of cold has occurred somewhat inopportunely for the celebration of a marriage to which about a fortnight previous we had been bidden, according to the custom here, by a printed circular, richly decorated, in the following form;—"*Der Trauung meiner Tochter Malvina Beata Wilhelmina Olga mit dem Herrn Ferdinand Woldemar Magnus Graf von* ——— *am 26ten Februar, des Jahres, Abends um 7 Uhr in meiner Wohnung gutigst beizuwohnen, bitte ergebenst, Carl Johann Graf von* ———." From the peculiar character of the bride's father, this occasion has excited an unusual interest in our circles. Count ——— is a man of few words at home, but those few are law. In order that his countess should never flatter herself with the existence of a will but of his moulding, he selected from his acquaintance a good little girl of fourteen years of age, whom he drilled into such a beautiful state of passive obedience, that, except wearing a cap, here the most indispensable evidence of matronhood, and furnishing his house with three little formal effigies of himself, she has never manifested signs of having progressed a day. Scandal indeed relates that at one time the countess evinced such alarming symptoms of dawning free agency, that her lord addressed to her the following words of King Gustavus, "Madame, nous vous avons pris pour nous donner des enfans, et pas des conseils," or words to that effect, and sent her supperless to bed; but M. de ——— gravely declares this to be a malicious defamation of the countess's fair name, and more than controvertible by the internal evidence of her character.

As to her daughters, this system has been practised so successfully from their infancy, that the factionary idea of speaking, acting, thinking, or even feeling for themselves is supposed never to have entered their heads. And any suitor for the honour of their alliance would as soon have thought of commencing his cause by sounding their affections, as the candidate for a close borough by canvassing the voters. All applicants therefore proceed direct to the domestic autocrat himself, who, with a regard for his daughters' worldly comforts which some parents might imitate with advantage, invariably dismisses all penniless proposers in the following laconic formula:—"Sir! my daughters are accustomed to live well, to dress well, and to drive well! Sir! I wish you a very good morning." Some of these amorous Lacklands have, it is thought, buoyed their hopes with the supposition that so wealthy a papa was security enough for the maintenance of all these items, but the old gentleman is not accustomed to render any account to the world of his paternal intentions. Nor was it till a suitor appeared backed by a *Schulden-freies Gut*, a debt-free estate, and other undeniable guarantees for table, garderobe, and stud, that he was known to deviate from his usual ominous dismissal, when, walking at his accustomed pace into his daughter's room, he said, "*Malvina, du bist Braut,*" to which the dutiful girl replied, "*Gut, papa,*" and not so much as inquired "*mit wem?*" (with whom?) Such, at least, is that incorrigible Baron C.'s account.

Accordingly, at the appointed hour we drove in full evening dress to Count ———'s house, and were received at the door by four shivering marshals, or, in other words, bachelors selected from the mutual families, each with a white bride's knot round his arm, who ushered us into a room dazzling with excess of light, where sat a formal circle, the married ladies on one hand, the unmarried on the other, and where

the countess, a blooming young woman, scarce older-looking than her daughters, received us in silence.

It is so much the habit in our civilized age to regard a marriage de convenance as a thing repugnant to human nature, equally tyrannical in act as cheerless in result, that though sad experience had taught me the fallacy of trusting the brightest of wedding hopes, or the most impatient of wedding faces, I involuntarily entered these rooms with the feeling of assisting at a sacrifice. Far, however, from the system of marriages de convenance being one of oppression and degradation towards the female sex, I am inclined to think that, in a country where custom marries a girl before she can know her own mind, far less that of others, and where the rules of society interdict all previous acquaintance, it is, on the contrary, one of mercy and protection. What act can be more tyrannical to the future woman than the indulgence of the girl's so-called first love? What results more cheerless than the vital mistake of a hasty choice? Granting both the marriage de convenance and that of affection to be productive of happiness, this quality, which in nine cases out of ten is not the spontaneous blossom of early love, but the after-growth of esteem and habit, is in both instances equal in amount. But reverse the picture, and view married life in its miseries, how infinitely sharper is the sting of that evil incurred by voluntary choice, than imposed by duty or custom! Sufficient for the day in both cases is the evil thereof; but who will deny that the woman who has been forced to disinvest the object of her choice of the colours in which she had fondly decked him, suffers anguish of a far more poignant nature than she whose view of her own condition has never been intercepted by a soft though deceitful medium?

In the pair about to be united, if the act on the lady's side was not beautified with the graces of affection, yet had she had the widest scope for choice, she could hardly have given her well-wishers more reasonable grounds for hope. For the *Bräutigam* was one of a family whose simplicity, kindness, and integrity are proverbial in Estonia —one whom the quiet girl might find it equally easy to obey—or rule. As we entered, a lamp fell from the wall and shivered to atoms—of course a good omen where none other was to be accepted. The only sign of the approaching ceremony was a small carpet spread in the centre of the parquête floor. Here the clergyman with open book in hand soon took his place, and immediately the bride entered, led by her father, and followed by the bridegroom and a long bridal train. The destined couple now took their place upon the carpet before the clergyman, the four marshals, bearing heavy candelabras, lighting from the corners, while the rest of the company gazed promiscuously on. The ceremony commenced by an exhortation, kind and moral, but of no higher, or Scriptural import. We stood where the countenances of the pair were not visible, but the bridegroom's thin, high cheek-bones were pale as death, and the myrtle wreath trembled like an aspen on the head of the otherwise motionless bride. This exhortation lasted scarce above five minutes, was succeeded by the Scripture admonition to husbands and wives, and by the usual routine of vital questions, to which each answered in a distinct affirmative. There was no altar —no kneeling—a ring was put on the hand of each by the clergyman, the blessing imparted, and all was over. The bride mechanically received the husband's kiss, and then sought her mother's and sister's embrace. Sweetmeats and wine were immediately served, and ere five minutes of this new union had elapsed, a *Polonaise* began, where neither age nor infirmities were spared, and where an old lady of eighty tripped it as lightly as the bride. A general hilarity pervaded the party, including even the old count himself, who pushed his new wig higher up his forehead, and seemed inclined somewhat to slacken the reins over his remaining charges; but the bride retained her pensive demeanour, and two painful, bright spots of red in

cheeks of that alabaster hue which characterises the Estonian ladies. And now succeeded a regular ball—quadrilles, cotillons, mazurkas, where the bride and bridegroom were danced with, selected for the different *tours*, and brought together by such witty and frequent devices as hardly to leave them breath for sighing. Then came a grand supper, with toasts and sententious speeches, where the four indefatigable marshals waited on the company, and, returning to the ball-room, the bride vanished, and in the space of a few minutes reappeared clad in an unbecoming matronly cap, her discarded myrtle wreath hanging on her arm. At this all the unmarried girls formed a circle round her, when, with a pensive, suffering look, which brought tears into many a bright eye, she kissed each in sign of farewell from their ranks. The same ceremony was performed by the bridegroom with his comrades, but brought tears into nobody's eyes. Then again the maiden circle encompassed the bride, who stood, a pretty emblem of Cupid with blinded eyes, and wreath in hand, while they passed round her, but saw well enough to put it on the head of her husband's eldest marriageable sister. This delighted the old count, who rubbed his hands and exclaimed, "*Meine Tochter wird eine kluge Frau werden!*" my daughter will make a clever wife. The bridegroom was served the same, and by rather a puzzling countertype bestowed his hat upon one of the youngsters surrounding him, who now with uproarious voices seized him in their arms, and disregarding his bride's nerves, tossed him aloft, his long legs almost reaching the ceiling, in sign of having utterly cast him out of their fellowship.

Four o'clock struck ere the guests began to depart, but by noon the next day the new-married couple were occupied in receiving a throng of morning visitors who came to congratulate. The same day was a large dinner-party,—the same evening the pair appeared at a public concert.—The following days were spent in a succession of entertainments, and thus the spring-time of wedded happiness was offered up for the enjoyment of the public. Nowhere are there such volumes of high-flown trash written on bridal modesty as in Germany, and nowhere is it less respected.

LETTER THE THIRTEENTH.

Street scenes in Reval—Obstinacy of Shoemakers all over the World—The beautiful Jewess—History of the Butcher—Woman's devotion—An absolute Government—History of Reval and Estonia.

In respect of physiognomy and costume, the streets of Reval offer almost as much variety as those of Petersburg. With the standing colony of army and navy is come also the long-bearded Russian *Kupetz*, or merchant, who is seen pacing gravely before his open shop, where neither fire nor candle is admitted, his hands drawn deep within his ample sleeves, his face nestled between his warm cap and beard, but who, the moment a customer approaches, retires behind his counter and asks what the *Sudarina*, or signora, requires, with more grace and courtesy than would be found in Howell and James's. These are the shops whence the Wirthschaft is provided wholesale with tea, coffee, and all the items of grocery; including the *Pastelló*, or Russian *bonbon*, the dried sweetmeats from Kieff, &c., and also with the bright handkerchiefs, coarse lace, the coachmen's silken belts, and other articles of dress with which their dependants are here supplied. The native Estonian peasant is scarcely more the tenant of the streets of Reval than the Highlander of those of Edinburgh; and even these long-haired and long-coated figures are interspersed with the people from the isles of the Baltic—that group of islands which a graceful historian has termed "the Estonian Archipelago," — and from the opposing shores of Sweden, who sledge over the smooth ocean-track and sell their commodities of coarse linen and lace from door to door, or practise contraband acts with greater caution. The women usually betray the national distinction, for, however the person may be enveloped in the prevailing sheepskin, the cap is sure to have some marks of peculiarity more or less gaudy. These caps, generally a structure of pasteboard, well wadded, and covered with chintz or silk, with various devices in lace, ribbon, and gold or silver fringe, are heavy and heating in the extreme; and were it not for the pride that feels no pain, many a young matron would gladly throw these oppressive honours from her aching temples: but here such importance is attached to this portion of the dress, that an Estonian woman, called up in the night, will pop her cap on her head before she passes a petticoat round her person. The Russian women are distinguished by a handkerchief, generally red or yellow, bound tight round their temples, from beneath which not a hair is visible.

Returning one day from a fruitless search through the streets of Reval for some shoemaker who should be induced to undertake the mysteries of the right and left principle,—this being an adaptation which the happy form of the German feet renders superfluous,—we turned into a court, where resided our last chance for these more refined attributes of St. Crispin. In a narrow passage leading to it stood a slight female figure clad in the most jagged garb of beggary; a cluster of rusty saucepans and tin pots slung over her shoulder, and an air of vagabondism, which, added to her dirty rags, made us shrink closer together to avoid contact. This apparently she remarked, and turned slowly upon us as we passed a face, not vulgar, nor bold, nor coarse, nor degraded, but of such surpassing loveliness, such a living resemblance of that most touching of all delineations of female beauty, the Beatrice Cenci, but more youthful still, and if possible more

pathetic, that we gazed in perfect wonder. Nor, though our shoemaking errand was attended with the same barren result, did we pause to add the usual lecture, not on the impolicy of a shoemaker going beyond his last, but on the stupidity of his not acting up to it, which we had most liberally bestowed on his predecessors, but, as if spell-bound, hastened to emerge. There stood that abject figure with that exquisite *Mater Dolorosa* head, like a beautiful picture framed in tatters. Long and riveted were our glances, but that marble face heeded us not; listless and unconscious as a child she turned away, and seemed to have no idea beyond her saucepans. We passed on, and had proceeded about a hundred yards, when—*c'était plus fort que nous*—we tacitly and simultaneously turned about and retraced our steps. "She is no Estonian," said the one; "she is an angel!" said the other; and these were our only words of mutual intelligence. My dear companion now addressed her in Estonian, the current language of most of the lower orders, but she shook her head and pointed to her vile saucepans. German was tried, but with little better result, when impatiently I stammered out in most barbarous Russian, "What art thou, then?" "*Ya Yevreika*," "I am a Hebrew," was the laconic reply—but it spoke volumes.

Such a prize, which only increased in every nameless grace the longer we viewed it, was not lightly to be relinquished; pointing, therefore, to our home on the rocks, we fixed a meeting with our vagrant beauty for the next day, and gently bowing her head, she turned away.

Beauty, as a manifestation of the Infinite, has at all times a subduing influence over the soul; but here this indefinable feeling was increased tenfold by the outward wretchedness of the object, and by its lofty avowal of a despised and persecuted race — one, here particularly, treated with all the contumely an unchristian spirit can devise. It was therefore with feelings of childish impatience that I awaited the reappearance of this pale vision, while some lurking recollections of the besetting sin of younger days—which, by viewing all objects through the medium of a sanguine fancy, had often been of great temporary advantage to others, and of subsequent mortification to myself—made me doubt whether, in the enthusiasm of the moment, I had not overrated the first impression. Ten o'clock arrived, and the Jewess was ushered in. I looked up almost in apprehension, so reluctant was I to lose the sweet image which my mind had retained. But what would mortal wish for more? It was the Cenci herself—the same open forehead, delicate nose, and full small mouth—the soft hazel eyes alone exchanged for orbs of the deepest violet hue, fringed with long lashes which sunk beneath my gaze, and fell on cheeks of alabaster slightly flushed with the morning exercise. Her temples were bound with a handkerchief of a full blue, which repeated with unstudied art the peculiar colour of her eyes. Her wretched garments were partially hidden by a decent *Kasavoika*, or half-cloak, which hung negligently from her shoulders, while the open fur collar enclosed the fair throat and head, like the lotus-leaf round the bust of an Isis.

The name of this beautiful being was Rose; she knew no other; and my companion and myself exchanged looks of increasing sympathy and interest on learning that the young creature, only sixteen years of age, who stood before us, had been three years a wife, and was now the mother of a child old enough to run alone. Her manners corresponded with the unconscious graces of her person. She gazed with abstraction and languor at us as we continued our glances of admiration, and while preparations for a sitting, which was to furnish some visible memento for future days of a face never to be forgotten, were going forward, sat down and carelessly examined some trinkets which lay on the table, while Sascha, not partaking of her mistress's poetry, kept a sharp eye upon her. But this she heeded not; and having satisfied a passing curiosity, this young Israelitish woman laid them down with apathy, and, folding her small hands

fringed with rags, sat like the statue of Westmacott's "Distressed Mother," the image of uncomplaining poverty and suffering.

Comprehending now the object of her visit, she remonstrated against being taken in the head-dress of a Russian, which her plain handkerchief denoted, and earnestly requested the materials for her national turban, which she always wore at the Saturday Synagogue. We left the girl-mother to do as she would, and selecting from our stores a large handkerchief of bright colours, and tearing a strip of muslin, which she bound round her temples, and fastened with long ends behind—the identical ancient Hebrew fillet—she proceeded to fold the handkerchief in the requisite shape upon her knee. We watched her with indescribable interest. How many hundred years had elapsed, and these small fingers adjusted the peculiar head-dress of her people in precisely the same form as if Jerusalem were still her home, and the daily sacrifice still offering! And soon this young descendant of the oldest people stood before us the youthful wo-begone Hagar of the old masters. But yet her physiognomy could scarcely be termed Jewish, as indeed my many and miscellaneous types may have evidenced, unless the tribes included softer and cooler looks than painters assign them, or than their descendants have preserved. She said she was not unhappy; that her husband, a sailor in the Russian navy, was "good enough for her;" and she made no complaint of poverty, but this it was, combined with the inheritance of passive endurance, which was written on her pale brow. Our delicate Rose of Sharon sat gracefully and intelligently, and, when the drawing was completed, took our offerings with courteous thanks, but with more of carelessness and apathy than avidity. To kindred enthusiasts no apology is necessary for the length of this narration. Suffice it to say, that we never lost sight of our "beautiful Pagan," who continued to grow in our good graces, until the removal of the fleet carried her off to Cronstadt.

Quitting the sweet Jewess for a very different scene, we repaired to a dinner-party at the castle, where we found no poetry, it is true, though much of good prose. Here another romance of real life was disclosed, which gave matter for nearly as much disquisition as the now fairly raked out history of Griseldis. A butcher of the town, having been convicted of the flagrant crime of stealing two oxen from an open pasture near Reval, was now lying in the dungeons beneath us, previous to commencing his dismal journey for life to Siberia. This man was engaged to be married to a young mantua-maker, whose pretty looks and ways had often divided our attention with her fashions. Of course it was thought and advised by all who wished her well that the now disgraceful connexion should be relinquished, but, resisting all entreaties and representations, she merely repeated a faithful woman's argument, "If he wanted my love to make him happy when he was innocent, how much more does he need it now he is guilty!" and declared her intention of accompanying him in his banishment. Accordingly the mournful wedding ceremony, the very antithesis of our last marriage de convenance, was performed in the prison vault, and a few days after, the innocent and guilty, now become one, started on their cheerless wedding trip. The faithful wife took with her the sympathy and blessings of every true woman's heart, and left behind a character which many an heroic matron of sterner times might have envied.* But let not a woman overrate the devotion of her sex. Whatever the sacrifice, whatever the suffering, there is such an instinctive pleasure in its exercise as would require more than a woman's prudence to forego. The woman, though not in this case, is as often falsely indulgent and banefully unselfish as the mother, and as often reaps only ingratitude.

The severity of an absolute government is most felt in the arbitrariness of a sentence. What has a criminal to

* This journey did not continue farther than Moscow, for there, in consideration of his wife, a pardon reached the offender.

appeal to in a law which makes and unmakes itself at will? As often as not, the convict who has worn out the prescribed term of banishment returns not to be free. If the ruler will it, he remains his life long under surveillance of the police, can engage in no voluntary choice of occupation, while his children born in banishment are serfs, and disposed of as the crown appoints. Nevertheless, justice must be done to an absolute government. In this early state of society none other would secure to it the overbalancing equivalent of order and peace which Estonia enjoys under Russia. Too insignificant to govern herself, and too tempting and too central to be disregarded by others, Estonia has been bandied about by every northern power, and has exhibited a scene of suffering and discord, of which the history of the town of Reval is sufficient to give an epitome. For this I must take you back to the year 1093, when the first buildings recorded as occupying its present site were erected by Erich IV. of Denmark. These consisted of a monastery dedicated to the archangel Michael, afterwards transformed into a convent of Cistercian nuns, the ruins of which are still standing, and whence the *Cisternpforte*, one of the gates of the town, derives its name; and a fortress called Lindanisse, and by the peasants Dani-Linna, or Danish town, whence the contraction Tallina, the Estonian name for Reval at the present day. To these were added other buildings: but it was not until 1219 that Waldemar II. of Denmark pulled down the fortress, probably on the Dome Hill, and set about erecting a regular town. From this time it appears to have been called Reval, about the derivation of which many have disagreed, but which appears with the most probability to arise from the Danish word Refwell, a reef; and well might this singular reef of circular rocks, which stands an insulated mass, with plains of deep sand around, suggest the appellation.* Reval now became of sufficient importance to be quarrelled for by the Danes, the Swedes, the Livonian Knights, then recently united with the Grand Order of the Teutonic Knights, and even by the Pope himself, who, however, seems to have thrown his interest into the scale of Denmark, by whom, in 1240, it was elevated to the seat of a bishopric. To this was shortly after added the privileges of a Hanseatic town, upon the same footing as Lübeck, which for that purpose sent over a copy of her municipal charter,—a document still preserved in the archives. Trade now began to flourish, and was further encouraged during the regency of the Queen Mother of Denmark, Margaretta Sambiria, who selected Estonia as her *Wittwensitz*, confirmed and increased the privileges of Reval, endowed it with the right of coinage, &c., and enfranchised it from all outer interference. These privileges, however, did not extend to the Dome, where the Stadthalter, or governor, resided, and which, as it still continues, was independent of the town, and not considered Reval. But even this short age of gold was disturbed by many bitter squabbles about rights of boundary, &c., which have by no means fallen into disuse. In 1284 Reval was included in the Hanseatic bond, and meanwhile this fertile province of Estonia, with its wealthy little capital, from being a widow's dowry, became a bride's portion, and in right of his wife, a princess of Sweden, was possessed for some time by a Mark graf of Brandenburg. After which it was again bandied about, being even known for a few years to govern itself! and was at length, the Danish coffers being low, formally sold, in 1347, to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order at Marienburg, and given, at first in trust, and afterwards as an independent possession, to his ally, the Master of the Order in Livonia.

The knights were very glad of so fair a province as an arena for their deeds, and, as far as incessantly and alternately defending and embroiling it, did their duty most valiantly, building also castles, where they lived in

* Another hypothesis might be advanced from a famous Danish standard, called Reafan, or raven.

great pomp, and introducing the chivalrous feeling of the age, and the luxury which always followed in the steps of these gay bachelors. And what with the increasing commercial wealth of Reval, this luxury was carried to such a pitch, that the gentlemen wore heavy chains of gold, and pranced about on saddlecloths embroidered with jewels, and the ladies sported diamonds and other precious stones in such profusion, that an old chronicler says, "*dass man mit dem Werth derselben einen guten Handel anfangen, und Weib und Kinder nähren konnte*;" and at weddings and other such festivities, which were held in Gothic guildhalls, some of which still exist, the beer was poured out so unsparingly, that the ladies with their diamond looped dresses found the floor too slippery to keep their footing, and hay was brought in to mop it up. At this time *Plat deutsch* was the prevailing language, and perfectly consistent with these libations of malt and hops.

It may be supposed that all this luxury fell hard upon the neglected serf peasant, and an old saying still exists, that "Estonia was an Elysium for the nobility, a heaven for the clergy, a mine of gold for the stranger, but a hell for the peasant," who, agreeably to the history of most republics, was ground down to the most abject poverty. Consequently, in 1560, they rose in immense numbers, attacked castles and monasteries, killing and slaying all before them, and menaced Reval, where many of their lords had taken refuge, so seriously, that with Russia, always a troublesome neighbour, invading their frontier, and unaided by their knights, who were fettered with debts, and had battles enough of their own to fight at this time, the Revalensers and the rest of the province formally threw off the dominion of the Order, and, calling over the aid of Sweden, took the oaths of allegiance to King Erich XIV., in 1561.

It is not to be supposed that the Order acquiesced passively in this transfer; on the contrary, it made several attempts to reassume its rights, while Russia, to whom Estonia had ever been an apple of discord, laid repeated siege to many of the minor towns. But, otherwise, peace prevailed during the Swedish sway; and Gustavus Adolphus has left, in various wise institutions, many traces of his paternal government, and Christina his daughter, of hers, principally in the establishment of a so-called *Ritterbank*, or regular matriculated nobility. But the days of peace were chequered by alternate plague and famine, and the Hanseatic influence declining, Reval declined also.

The manner in which the provinces of Estonia and Livonia were wrested from Charles XII. of Sweden, by Peter the Great, is too well known to need repetition. The Estonians esteem themselves fortunate in being united to Russia under so enlightened a Zar, who left them all their privileges, and took much delight in his new acquisition, visiting Reval several times, and instituting public improvements. Reval indeed has received visits from all the sovereigns in turn, who have paid due homage to its beauty and salubrity; and also, among similar events, remembers with pride the visit of Nelson.

The province has been allowed to retain its own jurisdiction, which is administered by twelve Landräthe, a strictly honorary office, dating from the fourteenth century, and as far above the vile corruption of the Russian courts of justice as our own English bench can be. The most distinguished names which fill the pages of Estonian history, either in an episcopal, military, or civil capacity, are those of the Barons Meyendorf, Üxküll, the Estonian name for the same, but now a distinct family, Rosen, and Ungern, all of which still exist in very flourishing condition, with many others, of more recent origin, from Sweden, Russia, and all parts of Europe, including even the names of Douglas,* O'Rourke, and Lewis of Menar, which stand here in friendly propinquity, their British origin being overlooked in their established Estonian antiquity.

* Of the house of Angus none now remain, the last Countess Douglas, a beautiful heiress, having married a Count Igelström.

I will only add that Reval and Estonia—for their histories blend too much to be separated—were more or less under the dominion of Denmark until 1347, under that of the Order or Schwerdt-brüder until 1561, under Sweden until 1700, since when they have proved themselves most loyal subjects to Russia, who selects her best civil and military officers from this Polyglot colony, and are caressed as "*mes bons Estoniens*" by Nicholas I., whom *Boje chrani!* or, in good English, God preserve!

LETTER THE FOURTEENTH.

Depressing effects of the long Winter—Hardships of the peasants—General state of health—Superstitions—The burden of the poll-tax and recruitage system—Anecdotes of recruiting—Miseries of a Russian soldier's life—Advantages of the same—Sascha's trials of conscience—The Russian language—Literature of Russia—Foreigners' ideas of England—Languor of the season.

April.

This is the season which tries the health and spirits of the native of a more genial clime. How long it is that our island has been clothed in green—how long it is that you have been enjoying sweet sights and scents in such profusion as almost to neglect these precious offerings, whilst we have sledged back to our country home over roads as hard with frost, and deeper with snow, than ever, to find Nature as dry, frigid, and motionless as we left her ten weeks ago! It is said that the first rose presented to Sir Edward Parry, on returning from one of his voyages, he involuntarily seized and ate. From my own present voracious yearnings for some token of verdant life, however humble, I can quite comprehend such an act. How dependent is man! If the accustomed blessings be delayed but a few weeks, the soul pines, and even the physical powers languish as with the *mal du pays*. The sight of a violet would, I believe, affect me as the sound of their native melodies did the home-sick Swiss. Our rooms, it is true, are decked with blooming exotics, but it is the green earth we long for.

The season, however, is unusually protracted, and the enervating effect of the spring air, which has long preceded its other attributes, is evident in the languor of the domestic animals around us. The little peasant horses, who turn off the Bahn up to their chests in the deep snow to make way for our better fed and less laden animals, can hardly drag themselves into the track again. The fodder is beginning to fail, and yet no sign appears of that change which is to remove these accumulated months of snow; for whatever of thaw the increasing height and power of the sun may effect in the day, the frost, Penelope-like, counteracts in the night; and the surface of the earth remains as deep hidden as ever beneath these swathings of cold cotton-wool. The long days, the dazzling light, the unvaryingly beautiful weather, the prismatic hues on the western hemisphere, on which the evening star shines like a pale spangle upon a robe of orient tints, all add but to longings they cannot assuage. Till Nature's renascence give life to these lovely elements, we embrace but a statue.

Now it is that the peasants claim our utmost help. If their sufferings be less sentimental than our own, they are also more positive. At the beginning of winter the peasant fares well, eats wholesome rye bread, and plenty of it. Towards spring, his stores, never well husbanded, begin to fail, and the coarse rye flour is eked out with a little chopped straw; but, when the season is thus prolonged, this position is reversed, and it is the straw which becomes the chief ingredient of the loaf which is to fill, not nourish, his body—so much so that on exposure to fire this wretched bread will ignite and blaze like a torch. This insufficient fare is often followed by an epidemic—typhus or scarlet fever. The latter especially is the scourge of the land, and almost invariably fatal to children; and villages are sometimes depopulated of their juvenile members, for those who

struggle through the fever are carried off by subsequent dropsy. As for prompt medical attendance, how is that to be expected among a poor and widely-scattered population, which not even the highest classes in the land can command? Many a nobleman's family is situated a hundred wersts from medical aid, and thus four-and-twenty fatal hours will sometimes elapse which no skill can recover. Upon the whole, however, the average of health is very good. There are no such gaps among families,—no fading of such opening flowers as English parents follow to the grave,—no such heart-breaking bereavements of young mothers, who, when most dear and most needed, delegate their breath to the infant who has just received it; or rather, few are such instances among the whole colony of the noblesse, all known to each other, in comparison with the loss which in both these respects the narrow compass of my own connexion affords. In the department of pharmacy the medical men appear highly skilful and enlightened, though in that of chirurgery not equally advanced. The daring, successful skill of the famous operator Pyragoff of Dorpat, however, has been frequently evinced here, as his sphere of philanthropic practice may be said to include these three provinces. In accidents and simpler maladies a village Esculapius is often resorted to, who will set a limb and open a vein as successfully as a regular practitioner; and as both patient and prescriber are equally under the influence of superstition, this enters largely both into means and cure.

The other day, a lady in the neighbourhood, whose adherence to ancient usages includes her among a class now fast fading from society, being attacked with erysipelas in the foot, sent for the wise man of the village to charm it away. A kind of Estonian Fakeer was announced, whom, in the first place, it required faith of no common kind to approach at all, and who, after various incantations, striking a light, &c., over the limb, broke silence by asking for a piece of bread and butter. "Cut him a thick slice; I dare say he is hungry," said the good soul, fumbling for her keys, and anxious to propitiate the oracle; and away ran the Mamselle to the Schafferei, and returned with a thick octavo-volume slice, which under ordinary circumstances would have chased away all hunger to look at. This the old man took, but instead of applying his teeth to the task, commenced tracing the sign of the cross and other forms with his long nails through the thick butter; and when the surface was well marbled and furrowed with lines of dirt, solemnly made it over to his patient to eat,—and this, though somewhat taken by surprise, it is only just to add, she conscientiously did; but how the erysipelas fared in consequence I know not.

From the frequent succession of masters I have alluded to before, it is as difficult to judge fairly of the Estonian peasant as of the child who is always changing school—a state of things which is not unseldom aggravated by the circumstance of a wealthy or indifferent Seigneur leaving his peasantry entirely at the mercy of a so-called *Disponent*, or bailiff; an individual who occupies much the same situation without, as a Mamselle within the house, and, like an Irish agent, too often grinds the one party and defrauds the other. The lower class of Germans here are a most disrespectable set, and not nearly so trusty as the native Estonians, whom they affect to despise. Some instances occur of Estonians who have raised themselves from the peasant's hut to a state of competence, retaining no indication of their origin save in their peculiar Estonian German; but, generally speaking, at best they are but a fretted nation, borne down by the double misery of poll-tax and liability to recruitage,—the one the price they pay for their breath, the other for their manhood. Happy the family where only girls are born, who offer the double advantage of working as hard, and paying less, than the other sex. The present rate of *Kopf Steuer*, or poll-tax, is four roubles sixty copecks, or about four shillings English, per head, not only upon the able-bodied man, but upon every chick and child of male kind—an enormous tax when

the relative value of money is considered. A revision of the population takes place every sixteen years, and, if the household pay not for those born unto them in the interim, they do for those taken from them; therefore the crown is no loser, and the ill wind blows no good to the peasant.

The recruiting system falls especially hard upon those provinces tributary to Russia, but otherwise not Russianized. No matter how foreign and incongruous, all atoms that enter that vast crucible, the Russian army, are fused down to the same form. The Estonian, therefore, fares so much worse than the native Russian, in that he leaves not only kindred and home, but language, country, and religion, and furthermore an inherent taste for a pastoral life, which the Russian does not share. From the moment that the peasant of the Baltic provinces draws the fatal lot No. 1, he knows that he is a Russian, and, worse than that, a Russian soldier, and not only himself, but every son from that hour born to him; for, like the executioner's office in Germany, a soldier's life in Russia is hereditary. He receives no bounty money; on the contrary, his parish is charged with the expense of his outfit to the amount of between thirty and forty roubles—his hair, which an Estonian regards as sacred, is cut to within a straw's breadth of his head; and amidst scenes of distress which have touched the sternest hearts, the Estonian shepherd leaves the home of his youth. If wars and climate and sickness and hardship spare him, he returns after four-and-twenty years of service—his language scarce remembered, his religion changed, and with not a rouble in his pocket—to seek his daily bread by his own exertions for the remainder of his life, or to be chargeable to his parish, who by this time have forgotten that he ever existed, and certainly wish he had never returned. Perhaps an order or two decorates him, or reaches him after his dismissal; but the worn-out Russian soldier has little pride in the tokens of that bravery which has consumed his health, strength, and best years, and earned him no maintenance when these are gone.

The age of liability is from twenty to thirty-five—the number at this time annually drawn five in a thousand. Each estate of five *Haken*—a measurement relating to amount of corn sown, and not to actual extent—can screen four *Recrutenfähige*, or liable subjects; no estate can screen more than twelve. This power of protection is engrossed principally by the house and stable servants—for your own valet, or coachman, unless you purchase his exemption, is just as liable as the rest. The price of exemption is one thousand roubles, or a hundred roubles a-year for fifteen years. If one year be omitted or delayed, the previous payments are annulled. Nor will the crown accept a man the less, and another suffers for his neighbour's better means. Besides purchase-money, the only grounds for exemption consist in a personal defect, or a family of three children. The father of two children is taken. At the last annual recruiting a peasant, already the father of one child, and about to become that of another, drew the fatal lot, and with streaming eyes and trembling limbs was quitting the room to take leave of all dear to him, when the door burst open, and his father, flinging himself on his neck, proclaimed him free. His wife had been confined of twins. With regard to the other cause for exemption, examples of voluntary maiming are not rare. A stone-mason whom we observed chiselling a delicate piece of sculpture under the utmost strain of sight, for one eye was blinded with a cataract, we strenuously urged to apply for medical aid, but smiling he replied, "I would not have two eyes for the world—now I can't be taken for a recruit."

On those estates where the population from some cause is not able to make up the necessary number of recruits, a child is delivered over, and consigned to the military school at Reval. The crown must have its "pound of flesh." This substitute, however, it accepts most unwillingly, as each of these little *Cantonisten*, as they are termed, costs government at the rate of thirty copecks a-day, and not above one-third are

reared for actual service. Such is the anxiety of the crown to enforce every means of securing men for the army, that the moment a soldier's wife gives birth to a son the parish authorities are bound to give notice, under penalty of five-and-twenty roubles for every month's delay. So much bread or corn is then allowed for the infant recruit, which is fetched monthly from the nearest town.

And now for the milder view of this system which at present buys the public protection at the price of domestic misery. If the recruit be taken early in life with no bonds of wife or children, his prospects may be considered as fair as those of any peasant at home. If he fall beneath an honest and humane officer, fairer still, for he is secure of good maintenance and good clothing. If the individual himself be industrious and careful he may, from the sale of his surplus bread,—for when honestly dealt by he has more per day than he can consume,—from the sale of his *Schnapps*, or dram, and other extra rations which he receives upon every grand parade, as well as with the addition of small donations in money which accompany these occasions (his pay is nothing, not above eight roubles a-year) —he may from all these sources realise a fund of three or four hundred roubles to retire with; has learnt a trade, has acquired habits of obedience, and is a free man. If the higher classes in Russia could be depended upon for honesty, the soldier's life would be no longer so pitiable.

Under the present untoward combination of outward monotony and inward languor which this season adduces, it requires rather a severe system of drilling to drive such idle recruits as myself to the study of Russian; and Sascha, who at first was so elated with my progress, that in the pride of her heart she knew not which most to extol, her pupil or herself, now sinks into equal despondence at the apathy with which grammars and dictionaries are regarded, blunders the most unjustifiable repeated day by day, and, worse than all, her respectful remonstrances parried by a saucy word which she wonders how I came by. For Sascha keeps a strict watch over any interloper which may have clandestinely intervened, and piques herself as much upon the decorum of her ideas as upon the correctness of her speech. Not unseldom does her zeal for the latter lead to most amusing disputes, for in the pride of a Russian tongue, a birthright which she possesses so undisputedly here in our household of simple Estonians, that she begins to look upon it in the light of a personal merit, she assumes a dictatorial tone equally upon the right articulation of any French or German word of Russian embezzlement as upon that of any of her own legitimate mouthfuls. For the Russian language bears upon itself the most direct evidence of the tardiness of the nation in the race of European civilization. Its scientific terms are French, its mechanical terms German, its naval terms English. But what are these after all but the parasitical incrustations round the mouth of a mine of precious ore?—for such may the internal resources of the Russian language be considered. The native Russian may borrow technicalities from others, but morally, feelingly, or imaginatively, he has an infinitely greater variety of terms at his disposal than any of the nations who may consider themselves his creditors.* At once florid and concise—pliable and vigorous, tender and stern;—redundant in imagery, laconic in axiom, graceful in courtesy, strong in argument, soothing in feeling, and tremendous in denunciation, the latent energies of the language are a prophetic guarantee of the destinies of the nation.

The grammar is excessively verbose and intricate, and, though many have essayed, no modern grammarian has yet succeeded in reducing it to a compass of any encouragement to a learner. Articles the Russian grammar has none,

* As one instance of their wealth of words, the connexion which we simply designate as brother-in-law, the Russian specifies by four separate terms, distinctly defining the nature of the tie—*Zjat*, or sister's husband; *Schwin*, or wife's brother; *Dever*, or husband's brother; *Svoik*, or wife's sister's husband.

but these are amply indemnified by three genders and eight varyingly terminated cases, which are brought into active requisition by an unusual abundance of preposition and conjunction. The declension of all parts of speech is highly irregular, the construction of words particularly synthetic. The language is profusely strewn with proverbs, phrases of courtesy, and other Orientalisms which occur in daily use. For instance, every nation has some mode, more or less characteristic, of recommending themselves to the memory of distant friends: the French send friendship; the Germans, greeting; the English, love; the Estonians, health; but with Oriental gravity the Russians, even in the most intimate relations of life, send only a *Poklan*,—literally, an obeisance, or salaam.

With regard to the literature of Russia, it is neither sufficient in volume nor nationality to warrant an opinion. Lomonosoff is the etymologist of the empire; Karamsin, the historian; Pouschkin and Derjavine, the poets; Grétsch and Bestucheff, its prose writers and novelists. Among the collective forty volumes of the latter writer is included a most interesting "*Poyesda vui Reveli*," or Journey to Reval, presenting the most concise history of the province I have been able to procure. Generally speaking, however, Russian reading is confined to translations of the light French, German, and English works of the day. Our modern novels, including Miss Edgeworth's "Helen," are already in this form.

The picture of English manners which many of our later novels hold up is not always what we ourselves have reason to be satisfied with, while the foreigner, to whom, in his complete ignorance of the relations of English society, such representations are little better than a kind of Chinese puzzle, with a deficiency of pieces which he seeks to supply from his own misfitting stores, produces a caricature still less agreeable to our national pride. For example, that word better felt than defined—that catholic term in good English society,—"the perfect gentleman," is here apprehended only in its outward rank, not in its inward virtue. The only idea a foreigner attaches to the word is that of an empty fop—rich of course, moving in a narrow line of prejudice and conceit, who is equally spoiled at home and ridiculed abroad; while the fact of its being the magical watchword for all that is noble and honourable in public and private life, the bond of honesty, the pledge for liberality, the test of good breeding, the conventional security, stronger than law, between man and man—felt by the noble in mind, paraded by the vulgar, and respected by the degraded,—the fact that the real sense of the word comprehends all this and much more, is as little suspected as believed by the foreigner unacquainted with English life. Let me not be supposed to imply that no foreigner can in his own person represent this term in its utmost meaning; happily the feeling is of universal growth, but Russia is not the land where that national acknowledgment of its influence, which saves so much time and expense, and gives such direct evidence of its existence, is to be found.

It is well that I have fallen thus late in my letter upon a subject which not even the drowsy languor of a Russian April can affect, or a rhapsody upon the perfections of my native land, never seen in brighter colours than when distant from her shores, might usurp the more legitimate vocation of these letters.

It is no less true, however, that "the best patriot is the best cosmopolitan."

LETTER THE FIFTEENTH.

Sudden burst of Spring—Last sledging drive—Thaw in the town and thaw in the country—The *Eisgang*—Inundation—Rapidity of Nature's movements—Green fields and trees—Nightingales without sentiment—Family Party—Introduction of a bride elect—Herrmann B.

May 1st.

"Der Sommer ist kommen, die Lerche singt ihr frohes Lied,
Der Schnee ist zerronnen, das Veilchen lieblich blüht
Est tönen die Lieder so leiblich und schön,
Ja, Sommer du bist kommen, und laue Lüfte weh'n,
Ja, Sommer du bist kommen, wie herrlich, oh wie schön!"

THESE must have been the grateful exclamations of some long Russian winter's recluse, for none other, I fancy, can adequately conceive the rapture with which the dawning blessings of summer are hailed. In imitation of Nature's movements, every creature seems anxious to throw aside the badges of their long captivity. Our jingling sledges, our smothering furs and cushions, and our double windows, are now discarded. The cattle have emerged from their various arks of refuge, and with their stiff winter limbs are creeping slowly about, snuffing the brown and yet lifeless grass. The peasants have cast aside their greasy sheepskins, and are pattering about with bare legs. The tender children of the family, whose bleached cheeks have mutely pleaded against the tardiness of spring, and who have in vain sought to substitute the freedom of outer exercise by indefatigable chasings through the house's great thoroughfare, are turned out on to the drier heights, with round summer hats and lighter garments, enjoying the warmth of a spring which to them seems the first. While we, like them, for simple pleasures make happy children of us all, revel in the luxury of breathing a softer air, of turning our cheek without fear of a smite, of setting our foot on mud, puddle, black ice, wet stones—on anything, in short, rather than on the beautiful smooth white surface which, like an over-perfect person, has left deeper impression of its monotony than of its beauty.

Our last sledging drive over a morass was a *Strapazz*, or mad freak, not rashly to be renewed; and, like the Prince in the Persian tale, whose spotless mind and rapid speed carried him safe over the slender arch of crystal, while the fair lady pursuing, with foot less light than her reputation, dropped instantly through, we seemed to owe our safety across our crystal plain as much to the winged speed of our horses as to any particular purity of conscience. It was a necessary visit which called us out, and our coachman, a very dare-devil of a Russian, emboldened by long luck, and versed in every track, guaranteed, if we went and returned before the full warmth of the day had contributed to the work of destruction, to take us safe across. So off we set, "splash, splash, across the sea," through a foot deep of water standing upon the yet unbroken bed of ice, while the great cattle-dogs who followed at a labouring gallop, and were tempted from the track by some delicious half-thawed piece of putrefaction, the relic of the preceding autumn, had many a spluttering immersion.

I have had the opportunity of witnessing the revolution of thaw both in country and town. In the former it is sublime—in the latter ridiculous. In Reval it made many attempts before the final breaking up, thawing rapidly in the day and freezing hard at night, till a few serious falls made the house-

holders look about them, and, by the time the thaw was fairly set in, sand was strewed plentifully about the streets. One evening, not aware in our equably warm rooms of the change of atmosphere, we left our house to proceed to that of a friend not six doors removed—being previously well provided with Indian-rubber caloshes, the worst conductors in the world on slippery roads. At our first step of descent from the house, whose elevated situation has been described, our feet were taken most unaccountably from beneath us, and, still faithfully hand-in-hand, we performed a *glissade* of considerable length, being only stopped by a ledge in the pavement upon the *place* below. The difficulty now was to rise, for all beneath and around was as polished glass, and tottering, slipping, and laughing we stood leaning upon a friendly lamp-post, able neither to proceed backwards nor forwards—our friend's lighted windows in front, our own behind, both looking all the more tempting because so utterly unattainable. A few solitary sledges passed us in the centre of the square, and, regardless of what type of Estonian decorum they might envelope, we hailed the fur mantles seated within, but, either not hearing or not heeding, they passed on one after the other to the castle of the governor, which was illuminated for a *soirée*, and we were left clinging to our lantern, which emitted a feeble glimmer over our heads,—for gas is too "new a light" for Reval,—and repeated its rays in the watery ice beneath our feet. At length a sturdy Russian sailor came up, trudging along in his rough boots as safe as a fly on a pane of glass, and to him we applied: "*Kudi vui velite, Sudarina?*" or "Whither do you desire, Signora?" Half ashamed, we pointed back to our own door, hardly above a long arm's reach from us, for all thoughts of proceeding further on these terms were abandoned. The sailor looked at us in some doubt as to our sanity, but with Russian courtesy, giving a hand to each, and setting his feet like a Colossus of Rhodes, he hauled us up, acknowledging at our repeated backslidings, "*Verno, otchen gliska!*"—Truly, very slippery!

This was, however, our last dilemma, for now, as if anxious to retrieve its delay, the thaw advanced in such rapid strides that it required, if not more inducement without doors, at all events less happiness than we possessed within, to venture into the streets at all.

It must be remembered that the towns here, like the state of society, have no drains. Therefore the Dom, which, from its natural position, offers the utmost facility for drainage, here simply pours its tribute of dirty ice-water with a kind of stepmother love into the town below. For several days the householders contemplate with perfect equanimity the spectacle of the whole *Douglasberg* and *Domberg* one stream of running water, while deep puddles of a black merging into an orange hue settle at the foundations of their houses, particularly embosoming the house door, and ooze into their cellar-grates. Choice of footing there is none, and gentlemen turn up their trowsers, and ladies tuck up their petticoats, and, in lieu of these, drabble the corners of their cloaks and the tails of their boas; and go about stepping from Scylla to Charybdis, and complaining that their houses are *damp*. And if two bosom friends chance to start on opposite sides of the street, there they must remain, were their hearts to break. With gentlemen no such dilemma exists, they being just as cordial on bad roads as on good ones. And now the sun darts a fiercer ray, and the thaw increases, and the roofs bring their tribute, and pour and patter down upon sealskin caps, or pink satin bonnets, or into baskets of white bread, or hot *brei* puddings; and these being past, bore deep holes in the yet unmelted ice pavement, and lay bare the rough old stones beneath: and then little puddles join their forces to great puddles; and the *Domberg* stream widens and deepens, and goes babbling along as if delighted with the novelty.

At length the aristocratic count, who all this time has sat upstairs in his dressing-gown, smoking his long pipe, not supposed in the nobility of his heart to know what the vulgar elements are about, issues from his house door, de-

lightfully situated on the very margin of the new stream, himself dressed *à quatre épingles*, and fully bent on calling upon the governor. At the first step he flounders above his caloshes—looking bewildered about him, he catches the eye of an elderly maiden lady at her window opposite, courteously takes off his hat, and down come a volley of drops on his bare head. This comes of a man's walking whose ancestral papers are falling to pieces with mere age: so he recrosses his threshold, not knowing exactly who or what to find fault with, orders his carriage and four to take him a hundred yards, and sends out a couple of men-servants to cut a channel as far as his boundary extends. And the water follows their strokes, and splashes them to the ears, and runs merrily past the count's house to spread itself in a fertilising stream over the market-place.

Here again it enjoys perfect liberty of conscience, undermining every last morsel of firm ice, filling the cellars with a dirty mixture, and the houses with a dirty smell; while all the filth of the preceding autumn — all the various souvenirs which a merciful winter had rendered innoxious both to eye and nose, now assault both organs, and go swimming about, and doubtless take refuge in the cellars also. Then, one after another, the householders, zealous to shut the door after the steed is stolen, cut drains before their houses, and the streets and *places* of the Dom are divided into patchwork canals, and old *Coya Mutters*, or portresses, assist all remote puddles with worn-out brooms, and the whole collection sooner or later finds its way to the town beneath, where we forbear to follow it.

Such is the history of a town thaw—but the apotheosis of the country is very different. Here the soft hand of spring imperceptibly withdraws the bolts and bars of winter, while the earth, like a drowsy child 'twixt sleeping and waking, flings off one wrapper after another and opes its heavy lids in showers of sweet rivulets. And the snow disappears, and the brown earth peeps almost dry from beneath; and you wonder where all the mountains of moisture are gone. But wait—the rivers are still locked, and though a strong current is pouring on their surface, yet, from the high bridge, the green ice is still seen deep below, firm as a rock—and dogs go splashing over in the old track, and peasants with their horses venture long after it seems prudent. At length a sound like distant thunder, or the crashing of a forest, meets your ear, and the words "*Der Eisgang, der Eisgang!*" pass from mouth to mouth, and those who would witness this northern scene hurry out to the old stone bridge, and are obliged to take a circuitous route, for the waters have risen ankle deep—and then another crash, and you double your pace, regardless of wet feet, and are startled at the change which a few hours have produced. On the one side, close besetting the bridge, and high up the banks, lies a field of ice lifting the waters before it and spreading them over the country; while huge masses flounder and swing against one another with loud reports, and heave up their green transparent edges, full six feet thick, with a majestic motion; and all these press heavily upon the bridge, which trembles at every stroke, and stands like a living thing labouring and gasping for breath through the small apertures of the almost choked arches. On the other side the river is free of ice, and a furious stream, as if all the imprisoned waters of Russia were let loose, is dashing down, bearing with it some huge leviathan of semi-transparent crystal, and curdling its waters about it, till this again is stopped by another field of ice lower down.

The waters were rising every minute—night was approaching, and the beautiful old bridge gave us great alarm, when a party of peasants, fresh from their supper at the *Hof*, and cheered with brandy, arrived to relieve it. Each was armed with a long pole with an iron point, and flying down the piles and on to the ice itself, began hacking at the sides of the foremost monster, till, impelled by the current beneath, it could fit and grind itself through the bridge and gallop down to thunder against its comrades below.

The men were utterly fearless, giving a keen sense of adventure to their dangerous task which riveted us to the spot; some of the most daring standing and leaning with their whole weight over the bed of the torrent upon the very mass they were hewing off, till the slow swing which preceded the final plunge made them fly to the piles for safety. Some fragments were doubly hard with imbedded stones and pieces of timber, and no sooner was one enemy despatched than another succeeded; and although bodies of men continued relieving each other all night, the bridge sustained such damage as could not be repaired. All was over in twelve hours, but meanwhile "the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth," and every hill and building stood insulated.

Such was the picture of our life a fortnight ago, since when a still more striking change, if possible, has come over the face of things. The earth, which so late emerged from her winter garb, is now clad in the liveliest livery; while every tree and shrub have hastily changed their dresses in Nature's vast green-room, and stand all ready for the summer's short act. Nowhere is Nature's hocus-pocus carried on so wonderfully—nowhere her scene-shifting so inconceivably rapid. You may literally see her movements. I have watched the bird's-cherry at my window. Two days ago, and it was still the same dried up spectre, whose every form, during the long winter, the vacant eye had studiously examined while the thoughts were far distant—yesterday, like the painter's Daphne, it was sprouting out at every finger, and to-day it has shaken out its whole complement of leaves, and is throwing a verdant twilight over my darkened room. The whole air is full of the soft stirring sounds of the swollen buds snapping and cracking into life, and impregnated with the perfume of the fresh, oily leaves. The waters are full and clear —the skies blue and serene—night and day are fast blending into one continuous stream of soft light, and this our new existence is one perpetual feast. Oh, Winter! where is thy victory? The resurrection of spring speaks volumes.

This is the time for giving and receiving visits, and our neighbours, who thaw with the season, are now seen driving about, not in sledges, but in their high-wheeled carriages — the only exchange of the spring we are inclined to regret,—taking their meals, in defiance of swarms of gnats and flies, upon their long-neglected balconies, and listening to the nightingales whose gurgling throats are heard incessant, day and night, till our daintier ears rebel at this surfeit of sweet sounds. For Philomel, instead of pouring her plaint to the night, heard only by those whom kindred miseries forbid to sleep, here boldly takes her station by broad sunshine, and, like some persons whose incorrigible thirst for pity leads them to overlook all the decencies of sorrow, parades her griefs, equally visibly as audibly, to all who will listen; in vain endeavouring to overpower the peals of a rival sufferer perched on an opposite tree. How truly has Portia said—

> "The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
> When every goose is cackling, would be thought
> No better a musician than the wren."

Here this bird of sorrow loses all her sentiment.

The gardeners are now occupied in calling the gardens into existence, for at the commencement of winter every plant is taken up and consigned to its winter cellar, not to resume its station till summer appears; and the families are wandering about, scanning the grounds as fondly as if returned to some long-withheld inheritance. Truly we might take a lesson from this frugal northern people how to prize the gifts of Nature.

Here every species of pleasure-ground goes under the grand denomination of a *park*, and it is impossible to convince those worthy foreigners that their wild meadow and forest scenery approaches much nearer the reality, and indeed requires no alteration in many instances beyond that of neatness; though other parts of their heathy and morassy landscape would lose in beauty by cultivation.

At one house we found every degree of relationship gathered together for the ceremony of introduction to a young lady just engaged to the eldest son. We should think such matters better honoured in the breach than in the observance; but here the *Braut*, a silent poke-headed girl, went passively through the ordeal; the mistress of the family presenting her to each as "*meine Schwiegertochter*," my daughter-in-law —for in Estonia, let the period of marriage be ever so distant, the nearest titles of relationship are adopted by anticipation. By this means a single lady, if she prove rather changeable, may provide herself with a large circle of connexions before she be burdened with a husband. Among the party was a young Russian *Garde Officier*, then enjoying his year of absence from the service—one of the many privileges attending the acquisition of an epaulette, —though no release from the uniform is allowed; and who evidently made the most of his holiday by not opening his lips, or changing his position more than was absolutely necessary: so that a little sketch of combined Russian drilling and German phlegma was made without his being in any way accessary to the fact. But "*stille Wasser sind tief*," and though Herrmann B. made his large brown eyes do all the work for his tongue, yet I suspect there was more behind them than his more talkative companions could boast. Lively conversation, however, is not the favourite bosom sin of an Estonian gentleman, at least not more than can be conveniently combined with the paramount discussion of a pipe, to which, after the novelty of the *Braut* had subsided, they all resorted.

LETTER THE SIXTEENTH.

Early rising—Departure on a journey—Drive through a wild country—Diversities of taste in the situation of a residence—A *Krug*—Rosenthal—Boulder stones—Castle Lode, and the unfortunate Princess of Wirtemberg—A very hard bed—Leal—An accumulation of annoyances—The Wieck, and its sea-shore riches—Baron Ungern Sternberg—Count and Countess ——, and their seat at Linden—Anecdote of Peter the Great and his friend Menschikoff—— —The Castle of Habsal—Dagen Girl—Odd collections—Riesenberg and the Baroness S.

Our journey to . . . commenced on the 10th of June. At four in the morning we awoke to a sky cool as night and bright as noon, but human nature was not the less sleepy, and Sascha had alternately repeated in tones of progressive loudness "It is four of the clock—it is the fifth hour," and blurted out various adjurations in Russian, which, as they would infallibly have puzzled her *Barishna*, or lady, when wide awake, she inversely reasoned would effectually arouse her when half asleep, before she could be prevailed upon to stir. Oh, this getting up! what a daily torment is it!—watchings and vigils are nothing in comparison! In vain would we run away from our sins; your sound morning sleepers are just as incorrigible in the full uncurtained blaze of a Russian June, as in the drowsy candlelight of a London November. But who calls the callers? Here we will change the subject.

Then came the hasty breakfast—the final closing of the great *Speise Korb*, or provision basket, on which all hopes of good cheer in this country depend—the last injunctions to the household—the last kisses to children, and off we set in an open barouche and four, well settled down in a comfortable carriage-position, and well disposed to enjoy our journey, or rather that luxurious, untiring converse of two individuals, near and dear, who have spent all life's youth together, and gathered much of life's experience apart. Nor was this delicious *tête-à-tête* through moist plains and hazy woods whose boughs swept our carriage, and whose murmurs scarce before mingled with the lisping sounds of English, likely to be interrupted: for on his box sat Mart, the Estonian coachman, and before us sat Sascha, the Russian maid, and my dear companion spoke no Russian, and I no Estonian, and the two servants were equally mute to each other, so that of our quartet only two could exchange speech together, and that in three languages alternately.

It was a strange but sweet drive through this wild country, of which we seemed the only passing tenants—occasionally rousing ourselves from some mutual reminiscence of girlhood's fancied grief, or soberer relation of womanhood's real sorrow, from dreams and scenes only of the past—for those who love deeply and soon must part, care not for the future—to gaze at some untutored beauty in the landscape, which each equally admired, or some tasteless freak of man which both equally laughed at. This, however, does not apply to the country-houses, which, with the exception of the wooden ones, are generally built with taste, and often with magnificence; but to the choice of a position, where, it is true, the good Estonians do not shine. Often in the course of our journey did the road lead us through winding avenues of majestic trees, or parky ground laid out by Nature's hand, where the eye involuntarily sought the mansion of the proprietor—but sought in vain: for if one estate be more plentifully gifted with the beauties of wood and cliff, stream or lake, than

another, there you may be sure the mansion, splendid in itself, is planted in some industriously picked corner, just where none of these are visible. To approach a house through shadeless corn-fields is the thing in Estonia; and as for a view, they prefer that of their own farming buildings to anything Nature can offer. Listen to that pretty woman who sits bolt upright on that hard chair: she is describing an estate her husband has lately purchased. "The house stands on a hill—beneath it a valley with a beautiful ——" what? a beautiful stream? by no means: a beautiful forest? neither; but "*une belle étable*," and that with a red-tiled roof.

But to return to our pleasant drive. Mankind now began to emerge—peasants, with files of carts laden with brandy or milk, turned off for the carriage of the *Sachsa*, as they still designate their Teutonic-descended masters—little peasant children with no further incumbrance than a shift, and heads of hair like shaggy poodle dogs, darted from a thicket to open a gate, while here a woman toiled at the plough, and a man smoked and looked on, and there a man was brutally beating a girl, whilst women stood by with unconcern. And in this latter case we could not resist interference, and Mart delivered a most impressive admonition from his mistress's lips in improved Estonian, which was received sulkily, and, like most temporary relief, I dare say did its object more harm than good.

By eight o'clock, the sun had acquired more heat than was agreeable to bear, and by ten it was insupportable, and our spirited horses hung their heads, and only languidly repelled the attacks of the great flies, big as cockchafers, called here *Bremsen*, which followed them in flights,—sometimes blundering into the carriage, to the great interruption of all romantic reminiscences. Under these circumstances the roof of the great *Krug* which reared itself in the distance was rather a more welcome sight than usual —a building so denuded of every comfort, that it is difficult to conceive how a travelling people like the Estonians, who are always staging from one great house to another, and traverse thousands of wersts in a year within the bounds of their own province, have not encouraged better accommodations. These *Krugs* are at once the public-houses of the peasantry and the only inns of the gentler traveller—immense erections, often very picturesque without, and particularly picturesque within also!—of which there are one or more on every estate, and whence a decent revenue is derived from the sale of brandy and beer. Those Krugs whose position on a high road leads them to expect company of a better sort are kept by Germans, speaking most ungrammatical German, with all the pretensions of a better class, and the squalidness of the very lowest. Here a room or two is allotted to the carriage-traveller, where you are expected to bring your own provisions to spread the filthy table, and your own cushions to fill the wretched bedstead. After a hearty inroad into our *Speise Korb*, and a short nap upon a bench so narrow that the first uneasy start threatened to fling the sleeper on the floor, but which offered the advantage of the least possible contact with surrounding objects, we turned out into Nature's vast hostelry, leaving Sascha and Mart to converse with their eyes.

Before us was a handsome country-house, called *Rosenthal*, belonging to a proprietor of the same name, surrounded with gardens of unusual beauty, which, though utter strangers, we received a courteous invitation to explore, and where, with sketch-book in hand, and a sweet voice at my side, more than the miseries of an Estonian Krug would soon have been forgotten. The country was very fertile—enormous fields of waving corn, some of them above a hundred acres in extent, hemmed in with lofty woods, and dotted with those stones which form a peculiar feature in an Estonian landscape. These are blocks of granite, varying in size from huge masses, big as houses, of every picturesque form and colour, to such as one man could lift, which lie strewed in myriads upon the surface

of this country, to which they are not indigenous,—especially lining the sea-coast,—and doubtless have been rent in some convulsion of nature from the opposite granite shores of Finland. I was laughed at for calling them *rocks*, though, if size be a qualification for that title, many deserve it. Here they are called, concurring in name as well as in meaning with our *boulder* stones, *Bulla Steine*. To pick the fields clean of these foreigners to the soil would be impossible, but the smaller ones are culled off for fences, and other purposes of building.

By this time the horses had enjoyed their necessary rest, and we resumed our carriage position—the only comfortable one to be had,—and passing through many pretty estates and fields of wheat, here a rare sight, came in view of the towers of Castle Lode about seven in the evening. Here another Krug, rather less comfortless than the Rosenthal one, received us, having the addition of a tallow-besprinkled billiard-table to the other stated furniture. But the old castle had sufficient interest to render the evening agreeable. It is a fine building with massive towers, enclosing a courtyard, with the inscription "Albertus de Buxhoveden Episcopus, renovavit 1435," and entered by a massive bridge and gateway over a moat. Altogether a most picturesque spot, with fine old trees and majestic expanse of water; nothing wanted but more ruin or more repair.* Its history dates from the earliest episcopal times in Estonia, being mentioned as a bishop's castle as early as the thirteenth century. It sustained many sieges, and all the wear and tear of a country so long divided within itself and contended for by others, and under Peter the Great became crown property, being appropriated as a prison for state offences. The last inmate in this capacity was a Princess of Wirtemberg, whose fate has given a horrible interest to its walls. She was confined here by Catherine II.; some say for having divulged a state secret, others for having attracted the notice of her son Paul. Be this as it may, she was young and very beautiful—was at first lodged here with the retinue and distinction befitting her rank, and is still remembered by some of the oldest noblemen in the province as having entertained them with much grace, and condescended to join in the waltz, where her personal charms and womanly coquetry, joined to the romance of her misfortunes and high rank, gained her many manly hearts. But like a royal predecessor in history, her charms proved her destruction. To her infinite wretchedness, they gained the attention of General Pohlmann, who had the charge of the beautiful prisoner. Under divers pretences her attendants were diminished, her liberty curtailed, and her keeper proved himself a villain. The sequel to this was her death under most heart-rending circumstances, being left like a second Genofeva utterly unassisted and uncared for at the time of giving birth to an infant, of which she was not delivered, and which perished with her. Her corpse was put into a cellar of the castle—all inquiry stifled upon the spot, and, being obnoxious to Catherine, no appeal to her justice was made. Nothing was done in Paul's time, nor in Alexander's, nor in short till a few years back, when the Prince of Oldenburg, nearly related to the deceased, came expressly to Castle Lode. Owing to the quality of the atmosphere the body was found in a state of preservation which left no doubt as to the cause of her death, and was decently interred in the church of Goldenbeck, close by.

We lingered about the spot, and saw happy children's faces gleaming from those rooms which this last hapless prisoner had inhabited, and returning to our Krug ordered clean hay into our empty bedsteads, and disposed ourselves to rest. But the shade of the Princess of Wirtemberg haunted our minds; and as for our bodies, never did I know how much it required to make a bed soft before. Sleep without rest is worse than no sleep at all, nor could all the

* These words seem ill-fated, for a few months subsequent to our visit this castle was reduced by fire to a state of ruin.

drowsiness in the world dull the intolerable aching of our bones as we turned from side to side on those hard planks. At length, persuading ourselves that it would be better for man and horse to avoid the heat of the day, we roused Mart from his softer lair beside his steeds, who rose, like a willing, gentle Estonian, without a murmur, and Sascha from her elbows on the table, whose little Tartar eyes could hardly open at all, and leaving our bed to hardier-nursed travellers, we dozed on in the carriage; waking up as we splashed through a wide stream, and then dozing again till we reached Leal at five. This place, which consists of little more than a long street of wretched houses, is called, *par excellence*, *das Fleck* Leal — literally *the spot* Leal,—and spot, hole, nest, call it what they will, never was there such a detestable abode seen. We stopped at a Krug, where not a creature was stirring, and, after knocking in vain, opened a door, when a scene presented itself which beggars all description. I have described to you the day aspect of a Volks Stube—we now saw the night one. About twenty creatures were lying on stove, floor, and table—old and young—boys and girls—higgledy-piggledy — the atmosphere at least 100°, and thick and reeking from this human hecatomb. In the centre of the floor lay a wayworn soldier with his martial cloak around him, the only decent figure of the party, which, with the exception of an old hag, who came forward in a state which made us retreat, slept on unconcerned at our entrance. Never was poor humanity seen under a more disgusting aspect. In vain did Sascha stand behind with Speise Korb on arm—no place was clean enough to receive it; and as for ourselves, we had been better off in an English pigsty. So out we sallied, tired, hungry, chilly, and dirty, and in the very worst of all possible humours with the *Fleck* and all its inhabitants, and sat down in the churchyard to while away time. The *Fleck*, however, boasts a history—has fragments of a castle and monastery still standing—has been besieged over and over again, and almost burnt down several times—I heartily wish it had been so quite. After studying all the inscriptions in the churchyard, alternately German and Estonian, with here and there a stray Swedish memento, and looking at our watches to hurry time in vain, we returned to our carriage, where poor tired Sascha was enjoying a short oblivion from her woes. Rather than disturb her, we bethought ourselves to try an Estonian Krug close by, for those incarnations of nastiness who had assailed us upon our arrival were Germans, and would have scorned to be confounded with the peasantry; and here we found, though no great accommodation, yet a clean table and chair in the hostess's room—a brisk, handsome creature, whom we disturbed from her spinning-wheel at the side of her sleeping child, and who soon took her place in my sketch-book.

From Leal we passed through a country uninteresting with the exception of an oak-wood of great age and beauty—a sight of uncommon occurrence—and blocks of granite of immense size which towered above the corn-fields, and by ten o'clock reached our journey's end.

We were now in the portion of that province called the *Wieck;* Estonia having been from the earliest times divided into four districts, entitled the Wieck, East and South Harrien, Jerwen, and Wierland, each of which has advantages of some kind or other, as the old song celebrates:—

> "In dem Wieck, da wird man rieck;
> In Harrien, da wohnen die Karrien;
> In Wierland, ist gut Bierland;
> In Jerwen möcht ich leben und sterben."

One drawback, however, to the wealth of the Wieck is a most monotonous country, with large sandy and morassy tracts, but highly fertile under cultivation, which both the priests and knights no doubt discovered, for this district appears to have been more particularly their residence. Lying also along the coast of the Baltic, here excessively dangerous to navigators, the shattered fortunes of a Wieck seigneur are not unseldom repaired by *reiche Strändungen*, literally rich strandings, which

the spring and autumn winds, in their fury up and down this narrow sea, throw on their shores. Not long ago one of these gentlemen had a cargo of the best Champagne wafted to his feet, just as he was sounding the contents of his cellar in preparation for the marriage-feasting of his adopted daughter.

It is a barbarous custom this strand-right, but civilization is not sufficiently advanced here to dispense with it, and fewer lives would be saved if this bribe to cupidity were not held out. That period of cruelty when false lights were hung out to entangle ships is passed away with the fate of the notorious Baron Ungern Sternberg, who from his own house, situated on a high part of the island of Dagen, where he lived in undisputed authority, displayed a light which misled many a mariner. This continued unnoticed, for he was powerful in wealth and influence, till the disappearance of a ship's captain, who was found dead in his room: the existence of goods to a large extent under the floors of the house, and other concurring circumstances, led to his apprehension. His family, one of the highest in the province, urged him to fly, but he was fearless to the last. Some of his contemporaries still remember his trial, which took place thirty-two years back, when he appeared before the Landräthe, his equals, in the garb of a peasant, with chains on hands and feet, and was condemned to Siberia, but not to the mines. His name was struck off the roll of nobility, but his children's left untouched. Some think him hardly done by, and his family stands high as ever; and, if they have not inherited the crimes, they have at all events the daring courage, enterprise, shrewd sense, and sparkling wit of their pirate ancestor. I have been told by an English seaman that the sensation of this affair extended even to England, and that placards were seen in the streets of London—"Beware of Ungern Sternberg, the Sea Robber,"—as a warning to sailors.

At two days' end, having accomplished a visit of too serious and private an import to be commented upon here, we resumed our journey, and took the road for the seat of Count ——, at Linden, near Habsal. Here, unless the traveller knows the Estonian as well as the German name of an estate, he is no nearer the object of his search; and, doubtful of our road, we had to inquire for the *Ungere Mois*, or Ungern estate, Linden having formerly belonged to this family. This is one of those houses which that said refinement which lieth not in the purse, and which both the Count and his beautiful Countess cordially agree in maintaining, has filled with those numerous, nameless little comforts which cost little beyond the thought. Linden is one of the most delightful residences I have seen, but at the same time our Count is one whose presence would enliven the four bare walls of an Estonian Krug. Wit without effort, kindness without display, nobility as much by nature as descent, and a life of adventure, combine to make him one of the most charming specimens of aristocratic mankind, whether seen in Estonia or England.

This estate lies directly on the coast, the passing vessels visible from the drawing-room windows, and has been immortalized by the presence of Peter the Great, who visited it in his peregrinations along the shores of the Baltic for the purpose of ascertaining the best position for his future capital. The Zar and his inseparable friend Menschikoff were here entertained in fear and trembling by a pretty widow, Countess Steenbock, née Baroness Ungern, whose feelings lay with her late sovereign Charles XII. of Sweden. Nevertheless Peter felt very well disposed towards his pretty hostess, but Menschikoff was on the alert to catch up anything that could at once demonstrate her lukewarmness and his loyalty. Occasion for this soon presented itself at dinner upon the Zar's health being given by the Countess, when Menschikoff's wary eye quickly observed that the goblet whereout she drank was decorated with the royal arms of Sweden, and thundered out a remonstrance in the style of the day, doubtless more loyal than gentle. The Countess said nothing,

but a tear, as our host assures us, stood in her beautiful eye, and Peter, whose heart could better brook torrents of men's blood than one pearly drop from pretty woman, thundered back upon his High Admiral all the opprobrious epithets he could remember, desiring him to fall in love with her that moment and make her his wife for an atonement. Of course Menschikoff did as he was bid, but the Countess's tears flowed faster and faster, for she thought no fate so horrible as that of being a Russian's wife, and relying on the generosity of a discarded lover, more to be trusted, it is true, than a favoured one, avowed herself the betrothed of her cousin Hans Rosen, who lived on the island of Dagen, just opposite her windows. So Menschikoff's ardour as suddenly cooled, and Baron Rosen took the widow at her word, and from their descendants our fascinating Count inherited the estate of Linden.

From Linden we visited Habsal, a small seaport-town which at one time enjoyed considerable importance, but whose chief attraction now consists in bathing-houses in summer, and the magnificent remains of the castle, formerly the residence of the Bishops of Habsal. From the magnitude of the ruins, this appears to have been an episcopal castle of uncommon splendour. The church, with cloisters and chapel adjoining, as well as part of the refectory, a tower, and other portions, are still standing, and are surrounded by embankments and a massive wall of great beauty, secured at intervals by turreted towers: outside of these is a garden with fruit-trees venerable as the ruin, with a moat beyond surrounding that portion which the sea does not protect. Habsal shared all the vicissitudes of Estonia,—was plundered by the infuriated peasantry, who made the Wieck especially the theatre of their excesses, and more than once bartered with the neighbouring castles of Leal and Lode for gold.

Count ——— is now erecting and adorning a mansion which has the rare view of a fine Gothic castle on the right, and the waves of the Baltic on the left, and promises to be as comfortable within as it is magnificent without. He is possessed of large property, including quarries of a fine quality of stone, with which a contract has recently been made to repave Petersburg, and is the encourager of all ingenuity in the peasants, and the promoter of labour for wages. Large estates on the island of Dagen are also his. The peasantry there have a distinct costume, and amongst his household was a Dagen girl, who was handed blushing into the drawing-room for us to examine her accoutrements. The head-dress was a circular plait of hair, braided with a red cloth roll, which fastened behind, and hung down in long ends tipped with gold fringe. The dress was merely a linen shift, high to the throat, and half-leg long, crimped from top to bottom—the linen being soaked with as much strong starch as it can hold, crimped with long laths of wood, and then put into the oven to dry, whence it issues stiff and hard as a board. How the Dagen ladies manage to sit down in this case of iron is more than I can say, since we did not see this evolution performed. The belt, however, is the chief curiosity, being made of broad black leather, studded with massive brass heads, with a second hanging belt in military guise, whence a knife in a silver case is suspended, and which fastens behind with a fringe of brass chains. High-heeled shoes and red stockings completed the attire, and altogether a prettier bandit maiden never was seen.

Linden is stored with all the curiosities which the combined taste and humour of our host has collected. Here may be seen beautifully carved Gothic furniture, and in a conspicuous place the painted figure-head of an English vessel;—fine old armour, inlaid firelocks, and a rapier which a middle-sized man must mount a chair to unsheath;—good pictures of ancestors, and one of a burning town where the moon is introduced as foreground;—collections of snuff-boxes, &c., and various relics of his grandsire the King of Sweden; and lastly, a collection of a peculiar kind of snuff-box, which the Count flattered himself not even one of

our own *bizarres* countrymen would have thought of making; so, with the particular sparkle of the eye and compression of lip which always preceded an act or saying which made everybody laugh but himself, he opened a drawer where lay, in sad inactivity, a whole collection of—snuffers. There were snuffers *couchant*, and snuffers *rampant*—snuffers which no one could have guessed to be snuffers, and yet which looked like nothing else in art or nature—Russian snuffers fine with gilding, but which rattled and let out the snuff—a curious German contrivance which required three hands, and a Chinese one with a trigger to pull, producing a concussion which generally snuffed the candle—out;—and lastly, as a satire upon the whole, there was a genuine Birmingham pair—light, bright, and plain—which with one gentle click did the work of all the party.

What a pity it is that Count —— has no children to inherit his fine property and finer disposition! He is now petitioning the Emperor for leave to legate both title and estates to a sister's son; but come what may, there will never be such another Count —— as the present. Two happy days were here snatched from time, and when the farewell hour arrived we forgot how recent had been our knowledge of each other, and only feared the future might never reunite those whom fate had placed so far asunder. And again a tear stood in the eye of the beautiful hostess of Linden, and our host looked strenuously towards his own feet—the neatest, by the way, in the world—and attempted some humorous demonstrations of the fidelity of manly memories, and the faithlessness of feminine: but it would not do; and we were worse than either. It is pleasant to rove through the world, but it is hard to part from those who gratuitously receive the stranger as the friend.

We left Linden at an unusual hour —our time was scarce and our energies plentiful, so we enjoyed our friends' society till midnight, and set off in the short twilight. Our horses had been sent forward about twenty miles, it being the conventional courtesy in this country for the host to give you his own horses for the first stage, and for the hostess to replenish your Speise Korb with the best from her table. Repassing Lode, we took a different route, and halted a few hours at Riesenberg, the seat of Baron S., and one of the most magnificent houses to be found here or in any country. The Baroness S. is a perfect Flora in taste, which with her, from the peculiar art she possesses of heightening Nature's beauty by a certain poetry of arrangement, amounts to real genius. Not only do her gardens and grounds bloom beneath her hands, but she has taught her flowers to spring from one pillar to another of her beautiful saloon, nestling themselves in rich clusters amongst the architectural ornaments, and hanging above like censers of rich perfumes, till, with the little blonde Cupids, whom she has also contrived to rear in profusion, sporting on the parquête floor beneath, a prettier scene can hardly be imagined.

Nothing can exceed the hospitality of the Estonians. Servants, horses, all are equally entertained, and the traveller sent rejoicing on his way, never to forget obligations so unostentatiously bestowed. From Riesenberg we commenced our last stage homeward, and leaning back with tired languor resumed that intimate language of affection, that sweet flow of uttered thought, which "pours from hearts by nature matched." And, low in the heavens, the bright orb of day, which had attended us in cloudless splendour from two in the morning—the steps of Aurora being at this season here followed by at least twenty rosy hours—streamed cool and subdued through groves of slender-stemmed trees, reminding us at every instant of Turner's matchless productions (for who like him has ever realised the truth of a sunny day, the golden fields, the fleecy clouds, and countless fluttering, glittering leaves?), and at last sunk to his short rest again before we reached ours.

LETTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

Bathing-life at Reval—Custom-house troubles extraordinary—Voyage across the Gulf—Union of various nations—Approach to Helsingforst—A ball—Baroness K.—Shopping propensities of lady passengers—Granite beauties of Helsingforst—The Observatory—The Botanical Garden—An eventful dinner—Sweaborg—The Scheeren—Symptoms of smuggling—Return to Reval.

We have resumed our life in Reval, the population of which is now swelled with hundreds of bathing guests — chiefly Petersburgians, who, enervated by the long winter's confinement and dissipation, imbibe fresh life both from the air and water of this pretty bay; and Germans, Russian bred, who are glad to renew recollections of their fatherland and mother-tongue at so short a distance. The Pyroskaffs between Reval and Petersburg are constantly plying, so overladen with passengers as greatly to neutralise their accommodations. Bathing is here conducted very differently from what it is with us:—no chilly early rising with a walk to the beach before the day is aired—no tormenter in the shape of a rough sailor or fat fishwoman to plunge you remorselessly beneath a horrid wave, where you issue blinded, deafened, and stifled, and incomparably colder and crosser than you went in;—but here, when the day is at the hottest, you step leisurely in, like a water-nymph, bathe head and face, nestle gradually beneath the rippling waves, and listen to their soft whispers and dabble with their smooth resistance for twenty minutes if you please: emerging with limbs warm, pliant, and strengthened, and with the most ardent desire for the renewal of this luxury, which may be safely indulged in again the same afternoon. I have seen delicate creatures, who at first were lifted from the carriage to the bathing-house, restored day by day, and in a fortnight's time bathing with a zest that seemed to renew all their energies. Bathing is so indispensable to the Russian, that he makes a study of it, and strengthens himself in summer as thoroughly as he warms himself in winter. Then, when the heat of the day is subsiding, the deep shades of Catherinthal are the universal resort; and equipages and pedestrians line the road from Reval. Here a band of military music plays, and restaurateurs offer ices, chocolate, &c., and you parade about and your friends join you, and you sit down and the gnats sting you; and if you don't like this, you may adjourn to the *salle de danse* close by, where the limbs so late floating listlessly on the waves now twirl round in the hurrying waltz;—and all this is very pleasant for a short time.

The reigning topics in the beau monde, after the Empress's illness and the Grand Duchess's marriage, were the *Lust Fahrte*, or pleasure-trips to Helsingforst—a city which, although merely a six hours' voyage across the gulf, has been only recently discovered by the Estonians. Two years back a few individuals ventured across, and, being entertained with great kindness by the Finlanders, returned with such panegyrical accounts of the charms of Helsingforst, that multitudes followed their example, and the hospitality of the inhabitants has been put to a severe test. These trips, which take place about once a fortnight, have proved a very successful speculation to the projectors, but a particularly sore subject to the shopkeepers of Reval, who, after paying high duty for their goods, are deserted by their customers for the better and cheaper wares of duty-free Finland. Hence it is that the Russian custom-house here out-Russians itself

in every vexatious and annoying precaution for counteracting this evil; and, were the explorers of the new region only men, there could be little doubt of their perfect success, but woman's wit has baffled greater tyrants than they. If it be sweet to drive a bargain, how much more so to smuggle it through seeming impossibilities! — Consequently the shopkeepers at home find no greater demand than before these extra regulations were enforced.

Having determined on joining one of these *Lust Fahrte*, we soon came in for our share of the tender mercies of the custom-house denizens, who, to make double sure, fall upon you at both ends of your journey. To our bootless indignation, our trunks had to be submitted to their inspection the day before starting, when they took a list of every article they included, extending even to the umbrellas, the same being an item of great attraction at Helsingforst; so that any forgotten article, any innocent pocket-handkerchief or pair of stockings of the most honest descent, not included in the list, ran the risk of condemnation upon our return. This plan had not even the advantage of preparing us betimes for our journey, and when we awoke at five the next morning there were still a thousand things to do, and a thousand to think of —the one remembered without doing, and the other done without thought. So many of the élite of Reval were bound on the same errand, that the whole little town was wide awake at this early hour, and equipages and four thundered down the Domberg without the usual precautions, and jostled each other in the harbour; while no less than a hundred and eighty persons mounted the little steam-boat.

What a mixture of northern nations and dialects were here!—grave Danes and slender Swedes; Russians of every style of physiognomy, European and Asiatic, with strange full names, like water gulping out of a bottle, and a certain air of liveliness and jauntiness, whence the fitting appellation of *le Français du Nord;* and the fat, fubsy, phlegmatic German, the very antithesis of this latter, whose pipe is as a feature of his face, and not always the plainest; all uniting in the one adopted tongue of courtesy, fitness, and pertness — French — and yet not a Frenchman among them all. Many friends and acquaintances were here, and Herrmann B., with the speaking eyes and silent tongue, who saw everything and said nothing; and, by an agreeable accident, it happened that no husband had his wife on board, and no wife her husband, and—'tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis 'tis true—these connubial fragments never appeared to better advantage; and, there being nobody to please, all were pleased, and the weather was beautiful, and the sea as even-tempered as the rest. Ourselves were the only unworthy representatives of "that isle which boasts, profuse as vernal blooms, the fairest dames and gentlest swains;" though the many plain Englishwomen and ill-mannered Englishmen who crowd the Continent, it is to be feared, may have shaken a foreigner's faith in this respect.

At first a decent pause was allowed for reserve; then the *avant gardes* of each party exchanged civilities, which thence quickly circulated through the mass, and only a solitary Estonian or two, in whom the spirit of formality seemed embodied, held aloof. The Russians, as the saying goes, "soon feed out of your hand," but they temper the act with a grace which the haughtiest of hearts could not resist. No nation so ingeniously unites the most perfect sluttery with the most perfect good breeding. The same man whose *intacte* manners would fit him for the highest circles will not scruple to exhibit negligences of dress which our lowest would shun—generals with princely fortunes, affecting a contempt for the effeminacy of whole attire, may be seen at times in threadbare surtouts and boots they might better bestow on their valets; but this *mauvais genre* takes its rise from the highest authority of the empire, who himself, it is said, occasionally enjoys the relaxation of being out at elbows. Be this as it may, neatness is certainly not an inherent quality in a Russian disposition.

Helsingforst is approached through

islands of rocks, some of them only tenanted by fishermen, others massively fortified—especially that called Sweaborg, which is the Cronstadt of this Finnish capital. Nor does the likeness end here, for the town itself, clean and handsomely built, recalls Petersburg upon the first aspect. Tremendous thunder-clouds were gathering over the rocky landscape, and we hurried to the *Societäts Haus*, the only hotel in the town, and a magnificent building, where most of the hundred and eighty found accommodation. Here we were no sooner housed than thunder and lightning burst over the town, but were little heeded in the welcome rattle of knives and forks. The storm subsided into a regular rain, but shopping was not to be neglected—what else did all these good ladies come for?—so we sallied out, buying new umbrellas and Indian-rubber caloshes as we moved along, and laughing at the immediate service these new acquisitions had to perform. And all having much the same errands, and much the same curiosity, we moved from shop to shop, through the streaming and deserted streets, a party of at least thirty, to the great astonishment of the townsfolks. Goods were cheap, but of no great choice; and we could not but admire the military precision of one of these wifeless husbands. Whilst others were debating what first to look at, he came, saw, and chose; but, unfortunately for his doctrine of promptitude, and more especially for his wife's feelings, they were invariably ugly things.

That evening the theatre advertised a piece in honour of one of our passengers, the lady of a distinguished personage, but we preferred a ball, where we were initiated into the mysteries of a *Suedoise*, a dance with no recommendation but the time it leaves you to improve your partner's acquaintance. The countenances around us were highly uninteresting—light hair and fair complexions plentiful. The belle of the room—and Heaven knows no great beauty was wanting to claim this title—was a Baroness K——, famed for the no very rare gift of portionless beauty, and for her hopeless attachment to an equally empty-handed Russian lieutenant. The Emperor, who, according to this precedent, thought it sweeter to bless one loving pair than "heap rewards on vulgar merit," touched by her faithful love and fading looks, allowed the lady a pension, that she might indulge the one and regain the other. The former has been effected, but the latter probably were too far gone to remedy; and the baroness has retained only that little peculiarity of manner of those ladies who look at their own beauty on the unpoetical side.

The next day, Sunday, was fine. We proposed walking and seeing the granite beauties of the place by sunshine, but Mesdames A., B., and C. intended no such thing. The shops, though shut "*pour préserver les dehors*," had back doors to them, and those wide open; and one pretty Russian acquaintance argued it to be her duty, as "*une bonne Chrétienne*," to work out her passage-money in industriously-driven bargains. Here, therefore, we abandoned them, and betook ourselves to the rocks, mounting from one sloping mass to another, till Helsingforst, with its numerous islets, lay beneath us, and from innumerable pits in the rocks glanced pools of clear water from the recent rains; while this Northern Adriatic mirrored a sky full and blue as that of a southern clime. Far as the eye could see, no food for man was visible—no corn-field, grass, or verdure of any kind, except that of the dark pine. Weaving and sail-making are the chief occupations and means of traffic of the Finlanders, and their corn they fetch from our fertile Estonian home. Helsingforst has not a population of more than ten thousand, and bears no remains of any former splendour; its oldest houses being shabby erections of wood, which contrast most disadvantageously with those of stone which have started up since its final cession to Russia at the peace of Friedericksham, in 1809. This part of Finland is included among the Russian *gouvernemens*, and has a governor over it; but justice is administered by a senate of its own, so jealous of authority, that,

on occasion of a visit from the present Emperor, who, thinking to conciliate his Finnish subjects, assumed the president's chair in person, the assembly refused to proceed to business, and gave his Majesty to understand that it was against their laws to suffer a stranger to conduct them.

Agreeable to that policy with which Russia treats all newly acquired provinces, they enjoy an exemption from taxes and duties till the year 1850.

Our steps soon led us to the Observatory, a building of recent erection, and vying with that of Dorpat in beauty of apparatus; on the hills opposite to which, and upon about the same level, stands a magnificent church, most appropriately surmounting the town, and, like the Isaac's church in Petersburg, still behung with forests of scaffolding. The university and senate-house are also fine modern buildings; and the Botanic Garden, a little rich plot of ground veneered into the grey rocks, bears witness to the existence of flowers, which otherwise these rock-born natives might have deemed mere fabulous treasures.

Our dinner was a meal of great merriment—above a hundred, including many officers from the garrison, sat down to the sociable table d'hôte, and the little officious waiters slipped and slided round, while another thunder-storm was welcomed as coming at the most opportune hour for all sight-seers. All was now harmony and good cheer; and the guests fisted their knives and forks, and brandished them over their shoulders to the great peril of their neighbours' eyes, and hurled such masses into their mouths, as would have given an abstemious Englishman his dinner, when—"lo! what mighty contests spring from trivial things!"—a luckless waiter's foot slipped—down went the main prop of our dinner, and, in the confusion of wiping up which ensued, no one thought to replace the important defaulter. The gentlemen, nearest affected by this loss, first looked angry things, and then said them, and still no joint was forthcoming; when suddenly a pair of soft eyes, which seldom venture above your shoe-tie, sparkled wide open and flashed like the lightning without—a set of teeth, like rows of pearl seen only by greatest favour on occasion of a languid smile, ground themselves from ear to ear—and a voice, hitherto only heard in such accents as a maiden owns her first love, thundered out, "*Bringen Sie das Fleisch gleich, oder ich schmeiss' Sie aus dem Fenster*"—"Bring the meat this moment, or I'll throw you out of the window,"—a menace quite in the Russian Garde officier style. My companion and myself exchanged glances which plainly said, "Can this be the gentle Herrmann?" But Herrmann it certainly was, transformed from the lamb to the lion, whilst his lady-mother, much such another snow-capped volcano as himself, sat by, in no way disconcerted at her son's eruption. The sequel was that the waiter, with German phlegm and true Hamburg grammar, coolly answered, "*Es giebt kein Fleisch mehr, und Sie können mir nicht aus dem Fenster werfen*:" —which must be given in French—"Il n'y a plus de viande, et vous ne pouvez pas *moi* jeter par la fenêtre"—and here the matter ended; but those dove-like eyes deceived us no more.

After dinner, unappalled by an inky sky, we hired, at a rouble each, a little miniature steam-boat, with a machine scarce bigger than a tea-kettle, which whizzed and fumed us about at the will of two Swedish lads, and landed us at Sveaborg. This island is about five acres in extent, loaded with crown buildings and a population of military, and sacred to the memory of Field-Marshal Count Ehrensward, whose monument stands here. Thence we steered for the *Scheeren*, literally the Scissors, a beautiful chasm of sea, between meeting and retreating islands, where trees with *leaves* grow by the water's edge; and where the Helsingforstians in their holiday expeditions land and bear off a leaf with as keen a pleasure as we should the choicest bouquet. But "pleasure suits itself to all,—the rich can but be pleased." The rain fell occasionally in torrents around us; but our little puffing bark seemed to bear a charm

or, as a ready Russian officer of the party observed, "*pas un, mais plusieurs;*" and we passed dry on, while some delicious voices on board gave us alternately German and Russian melodies.

There is a luxury in passive enjoyment, with which the smooth motion of the waters seems particularly in unison. Here you ruminate without thought, as you progress without effort; while on the element which wears on its surface no trace of the past, the mind involuntarily wanders back to days gone by for ever, recalling images which early experience or early sorrow —for these are synonymous—has left ineffaceable, and which the easier prudence of a more active hour forbids. Before the voices had ceased, many of our party were living far away in a world of their own, conversing with those to whom no outer object bore reference, while Herrmann, turned again to stone, sat gazing into the waves.

The next morning the first stage of smuggling had commenced; for where were all the accumulated shoppings of Saturday and *Sunday* to be stowed? The trunks, everybody knew, were forbidden ground; so those who went up lean to bed came down plump and comfortable, and those who were stout already stretched a size or two without any inconvenience. One lady stuffed her man-servant, maid-servant, and three children, and still had goods to spare. Another wadded two tall striplings of sons into well-furnished men, who assured us they could lie down on the bare floor on any side with perfect comfort. Old caps and old umbrellas were distributed with the utmost liberality to the waiters, who seemed accustomed to offerings of this kind; and in lieu of these every civilian mounted a light Leghorn hat, and all the world sported new umbrellas. Those who had abstained from the general buying were now in great request; and "Can't you accommodate this small parcel?" —or "Do find a corner just for this shawl,"—or something to that effect—was heard on all sides; and any scruples with regard to defrauding governments, which might be floating in a few individuals, soon melted before the obvious charity of helping your neighbour.

At twelve o'clock we all repaired to the Quay, and mounted the "Fürst Menschikoff," which had arrived the day before from Abo and Stockholm, bringing with it a fresh influx of passengers. Some of our friends also had deserted for a further trip, and, in the exchange, two Englishmen were included, who somewhat tried the feelings of the military Russians on board by mentioning a great *fair* they were about to visit at Moscow, which on further inquiry turned out to be a review of all the Imperial troops. The sea this time did not treat us so well as before. One half of the passengers were ill, and the other half by no means well. But a cold east wind blew us over, and in less than six hours' time the dim outline of the Domberg at Reval was visible. Ere long the custom-house harpies were upon us, and, knowing how singularly the air of Helsingforst had fattened our party, I must own I trembled with apprehension. But the first few passed muster with a courage worthy of a better cause, and which inspired their followers with confidence. Various scrutinising taps and pats were received with perfect sang-froid, or repelled with dignified innocence; and I believe the whole party came off safe, —doubtless to boast of their smuggling deeds for the rest of their lives. For here to outwit a custom-house officer is as much a feather in cap as the Irishman's deceit of the exciseman.

LETTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

Reval at Midsummer—Antiquities—Gates—Churches—Dance of Death—The Duke de Croy—Hôtel de Ville—Corps of the Schwarzen Häupter—Towers—Antiquities of the Domberg—Kotzebue—The Jahrmarkt, and its varied population—Catherinthal—The water-party—Visit to a Russian man-of-war.

At this sultry season our residence upon the Domberg is particularly agreeable. Here every sea-breeze from the glistening and rippled bay sweeps in grateful coolness over us, and leaf and streamer on our rocky eminence are seen fluttering in the freshened air, while the heated streets lie in burning stillness below. During the day's meridian no one, uncompelled, stirs from home, but towards evening, if such it may be called where we retire to rest by broad daylight at eleven at night, we call together a few choice spirits, and loiter from one *hof*, or court, to another, drinking in all the beauties of Gothic tower, ruined convent, misty island, and orient cloud, waiting for the evening gun from the Russian men-of-war in the harbour, or for the gay clarion from the Russian churches; when, careless of time and spendthrift of light, we gradually descend the embankment, crossing over archways and under tunnels, and running down green slopes, till we find ourselves at one of the town gates, and with shortened breaths are constrained to climb to our eagle's eyrie on the Dom again. And a couple of lovers are in our train—harmless beings, whose transient happiness we favour, and who invariably fall behind and follow us like sleep-walkers—knowing no fatigue;—till the very sentinels respect their reveries, and silently motion them the path we have taken. And when, weary with the long walk and ceaseless light, we are separating for the night, they artlessly ask, "*Wollen sie nicht weiter gehen?*"—won't you walk farther?—and, like children, never know when they have enough.

But now you must descend with us into the narrow streets of the town, which we explore with the freedom of foreigners and intimacy of natives, but where we take no lovers to fetter our footsteps. Whoever has seen Hamburg and Lübeck, or the Netherlandish towns, will recognise that Reval has participated in the same Hanseatic bond. The irregular, many-storied houses—their gables towards the street—with the ample garret above and the spacious hall beneath, betokening room equally for the rich merchant's goods and the rich merchant's hospitality—the Gothic-arched doorways, approached by flights of steps, with projecting spaces on each side, with stone benches where families in olden times sate before their doors in sociable converse, many of which are now removed by order of the Emperor, as contracting too much the width of the streets—the old Hôtel de Ville—the many ancient churches, towers, and gateways—all these features perpetually remind the traveller of its many sister cities of similar ancient importance and present decay, and present an aspect which one of the young Grand Duchesses has in court language pronounced to be "*parfaitement rococo.*"

Like ancient Thebes, Reval is entered by seven gates; viz., the great Strandpforte, the lesser Strandpforte, the Lehmpforte, the Karripforte, the Schmiedepforte, the Sisternpforte, and the Dompforte. These are all picturesque erections, decorated with various historical mementos—the arms of the Danish domination, or the simple cross of the Order, or the municipal shield of the city, &c. The

Schmiedepforte is noted as being the scene of an act of daring magisterial justice, which took place in 1535. At all times a petty animosity had existed between the rich burghers of Reval and the lawless nobility of the province, who troubled the commerce and derided the laws of the former, and were by no means induced to a pacific mode of life by the example of their knights. At the time alluded to, however, the atrocious murder of one of his own peasants in the streets of Reval by Baron Üxküll of Riesenberg, one of the most powerful nobles of the country, so greatly excited the ire of the city magistracy that they menaced the offender, should he ever be found within their jurisdiction, with the utmost severity of the law. Nevertheless, despising their threat and with the insolence of one who acknowledged no law, Baron Üxküll entered the city in mere bravado, attended by a slender retinue—was seized, condemned, and, in full view of his friends without the walls, executed beneath the Schmiedepforte. Long and sanguinary were the disputes that followed upon this act, and, as some pacification to Üxküll's memory, the burghers walled up the gateway, which was not re-opened till the beginning of this century.

The churches of Reval are numerous, comprising Lutheran, Greek, Swedish, and Roman Catholic places of worship. The Lutheran are of the greatest antiquity. To speak of the church of Saint Olai under this head may seem paradoxical, since the edifice of this name, which was originally built in 1329, and has been struck and partially consumed by lightning no less than eight times, is now only just risen from the ashes in which it was finally laid in 1820. Its archives and library, however, preserve an unbroken history; and many of its architectural ornaments, coeval with its earliest erection, have been saved from the flames. Among the former is a piece of sculpture of great richness, consisting of two wide niches, the upper one empty, the lower occupied by a skeleton with a toad resting on the body and a serpent crawling out of the ear—supposed to typify the destruction of an idol image recorded to have been filled with these reptiles:—and with a gorgeous breadth of stone-work in eight partitions around, exhibiting the triumph of Christianity in the Passion of our Saviour, and other parts of the New Testament. This bears date 1513. The tower of St. Olai, which has been rebuilt precisely on the former scale and form, is about 250 English feet high, and serves as a landmark in navigation. This edifice, the cathedral church of the lower town, is in pure early Gothic, with lancet windows of great beauty, and dedicated to St. Olai, a canonized king of Norway, who mounted the throne at the beginning of the eleventh century, and first introduced Christianity among the Norwegians.

The next church in importance is that of St. Nicholas—a large, three-aisled structure with massive square tower—built by Bishop Nicholas in 1317. This appears to have eluded the zeal of the iconoclasts of reforming times, who throughout Estonia seem to have been as hasty in stripping the churches as her doctors were in denuding the creed, and possesses many relics of Roman Catholic times. The most interesting are the pictures of the altar, especially two wing paintings containing small half-length figures of bishops, cardinals, priests, and nuns—three on each side—in Holbein's time and manner, on a blue ground, and of great beauty. Also a picture, placed for better lighting at the back of the altar—a Crucifixion, including the two thieves, with town and mountains in the background, and a procession of equestrian figures entering the gate. This is of singular beauty of expression and form, though much injured by recent renovations—of the school of Raphael, and especially in the manner of Andrea del Salerno.

Immediately at the entrance of the church on the right hand is a representation of the oft-repeated Dance of Death—coinciding not only in age and arrangement, but also word for word in the Platt Deutsch verses beneath, with the same subject in St. Mary's church at Lübeck—in some instances each mu-

tually assisting the other's deficiency. The beginning, including the Pope, the Emperor, the Empress, the Cardinal, and the King, which, if I mistake not, are failing in Lübeck, are here preserved. The rest is lost or defaced, though the inscriptions are in a few cases still legible—and terminating with "*Dat Wegenkind to dem Dode*" the cradle-child to Death,—with this naïve couplet:

"O Dot! wo shal ik dat vorstan!
Ik shal danssen, un kan nicht ghan!"

or, in good German,

"O Tod! wie soll ich dass verstehen!
Ich soll tanzen, und kann nicht gehen!"—

which we may thus render in English:—

Oh Death! what's the use of all this talk!
Would you have me dance before I can walk?

But the peculiar drollery of Platt Deutsch is unattainable in a more cultivated tongue.

The chapels of some of the chief nobility, with massive iron gates and richly adorned with armorial bearings, are attached to this church, though all in a very neglected state. The Rosen chapel is now occupied by the unburied body of a prince, who expiates in this form a life of extravagance. The Duke de Croy—a Prince of the Roman Empire, Markgraf of Mount Cornette, and of other fiefs, &c., and descended from the kings of Hungary—after serving with distinction under the Emperor of Austria and King of Poland, passed over to the service of Peter the Great, obtained the command of the Russian army, and was defeated by Charles XII. at the battle of Narva. Fearing the Zar's resentment, he surrendered to the enemy, and was sent a prisoner at large to Reval, which has been, and is still, the scene of honourable banishment for state prisoners, and which at that epoch was yet under the sway of Sweden. Here, indulging a passion for ostentation, he managed to spend so much, that though only a few years elapsed between his removal to Reval and his death, the residue of his fortune was unequal to meet his debts, upon which the numerous creditors, availing themselves of an old law, which refuses the rites of sepulture to insolvent debtors, combined to deny him a Christian burial, and the body was placed in a cellar in the precincts of this church. It might be imagined that, when these said relentless creditors were not only dead, but, unlike their noble debtor, buried also, the Duke de Croy would have found a resting-place; but when that time came, all who had profited, as well as all those who had lost by his extravagance, were gone also, and their descendants cared little how he had lived or how he had died. So the body remained in its unconsecrated abode, until, accident having discovered it, in 1819, in a state of perfect preservation owing to the anti-putrescent properties of the cold, it was removed into the Rosen chapel, and now ranks among the lions of this little capital. The corpse is attired in a rich suit of black velvet and white satin, equally uninjured by the tooth of time—with silk stockings, full curled wig, and a ruff of the most exquisite point lace, which any modern Grand Duchess might also approve. The remains are those of a small man, with an aristocratic line of countenance. There is something at all times imposing in viewing the cast-off dwelling of an immortal spirit—that clay which weighs down our better portion, and which, though so worthless in itself, is so inexpressibly dear to those who love us, and so tenaciously clung to by ourselves. Life had quitted this tenement 138 years. The old Sacristan, a little shrivelled mummy of a man, scarcely more human-looking than the body before us, profits in his creature-comforts by the exhibition of this dust, which he stroked and caressed with something of gratitude and fellow-feeling, and, locking the ponderous door, ejaculated, "*Da liegt mein bester Freund!*"—"There lies my best friend!" Poor Duke de Croy!

In respect of antiquity the Estonian church bears off the palm in Reval—being mentioned by Jean, Bishop of Reval, when he granted to the city the "*Jus ecclesiasticum et episcopale,*" after the form of the Lübeck statute, in 1284—a time when St. Olai and St. Nicholas did not exist.

The Russian church, or one adapted to the Russian service in later times, is

also of great antiquity, but has been altered to the external type of all Greek places of worship.

The Hôtel de Ville has been also renovated with windows of modern form, which possess no recommendation beyond that of admitting more light. Within, the magisterial chair is still held in the empty and worn-out forms of days of more importance, and the effigy of the burgher who had his tongue cut out for divulging a state secret, warns his successors of less responsible times to be more discreet.

Several Guildhalls, with groined roofs, tell of those corporations of merchants who here met for business or feasting, and are now passed away with the commerce of Reval: with the exception, however, of the corps of the *Schwarzen Häupter, les Frères têtes-noires*—so called probably from their patron saint, St. Mauritius—a military club of young merchants formed in 1343, for the defence of the city. These were highly considered—were endowed by the Masters of the Order with the rank and privileges of a military body—wore a peculiar uniform—had particular inauguration ceremonies and usages—and bore their banner, "*aut vincendum aut moriendum*," on many occasions most gallantly against the numberless foes who coveted the riches of Reval. Every young apprentice was required, on pain of a heavy fine, to enter this corps upon the first year of his domiciliation in Reval, and each new brother was welcomed with solemn observances, and plentiful draughts of beer, now substituted by wine.

On some occasions this corps suffered severely, and a defaced monument on the Pernau road, a few wersts from the walls of Reval, attests the slaughter of many of their numbers by the Russians in 1500. Each successive sceptre has acknowledged their rights—Peter the Great became a member, and himself inscribed his name in their registers. Catherine II. granted their chief the rank of a captain in the Russian army. Alexander was admitted to the brotherhood, and ordained that the banner should thenceforth receive the military salute; and Nicholas' equally recognising the ancient deeds or present harmlessness of the Order, has deviated from his general condemnation of all associations, and is himself an Imperial Schwarzhäupt. The last time that this corps was summoned for the defence of the city was on occasion of the Swedish invasion in 1790. The chief edifice where they held their meetings is curiously adorned in front with the Moor's head and other armorial pieces of sculpture; but within it has been stripped of all antiquity, excepting the archives of the Order, and portraits of the various crowned heads and Masters of the Livonian Order who have held Estonia in their sway. The altar-piece from the convent of St. Brigitta—a magnificent ruin upon the sea-coast in full view of Reval—is also placed here, being a piece in three compartments, in the Van Eyck manner, comprising God the Father, with the Infant Saviour in the centre—the Virgin on the one hand, the Baptist on the other—and greatly recalling portions of the famous altar-piece painted for St. Bavon's church at Ghent. On the back of the two wings, and closing over the centre-piece, is the subject of the Annunciation—two graceful figures in grey, of later Italian date.

This is but an inadequate sketch of the antiquities of this city, which is further strewn with the ruined remains of convents and monasteries of considerable interest, though too much choked with parasitical buildings to be seen to any advantage. The outer circumference is bound in with walls and towers of every irregular form, most of which have significant names, as for instance, "*der lange Herrmann*," a singularly beautiful and lofty circular tower crowning the Dom; and "*die dicke Marguerite*" — a corpulent erection lower in the town.

The Dom is equally stored with traces of olden times—consisting of the old castle, which encloses an immense quadrangle, and is in part appropriated to the governor's residence;—the Dom Church, a building of incongruous architecture, filled with tombs of great interest, of the Counts de la Gardie,

Thurn, Horn, &c., beneath which lie the vaults of several corporations of trade, variously indicated—the shoemakers' company by the bas-relief of a colossal boot in the pavement—the butchers' by an ox's head, &c. Further on is the Ritterschafts Haus, or Hôtel de la Noblesse, where the Landräthe assemble, the Landtag is held, and all the business connected with the aristocracy of the province conducted. Every family of matriculated nobility has here its shield of arms and date of patent; while on tablets of white marble are inscribed the names of all the noble Estonians who served in the French campaign, and on tables of black marble the names of those who fell;—and truly Estonia has not been niggard of her best blood. The archives of the Ritterschaft do not date beyond 1590, all preceding documents having perished on a voyage to Sweden; but important additions have been made by the researches of the well-known German writer Kotzebue, among the secret state-papers of the Teutonic Order at Königsberg.

Kotzebue spent several years at Reval, actively engaged in disseminating those doctrines of so-called freedom and equality which followed in the train of the French revolution, and were further promulgated by the publication of Göthe's Wahlverwandschaften. And much private misery, the traces of which still remain, ensued to this province by the adoption of chimerical schemes of happiness, which consisted in little more than in yielding to each new inclination in turn, and throwing off all old ties as they lost their attraction. Nor, it is just to add, did Kotzebue himself hesitate to practise what he too successfully preached. First one Estonian lady pleased him, and became his wife; but a year or two after, another pleased him still better, and the first was divorced: and, strange to say, before this votary of the law of reason was suited to his mind, a third, best of all, appeared. His murder at Manheim, by Sandt the student, was the sequel to his residence in Russia; and more than one of his widows, I believe, and several of his descendants, still remain in Estonia.

The *Jahrmarkt*, or annual fair, is now going forward in Reval. This is held in a most picturesque spot, beneath the old elm-trees before the church of St. Nicholas; the low wide-roofed booths surmounted with their different insignia, with wares of all colours floating around them, and merchants of all complexions swarming before them, while the venerable trees and time-worn edifice look down in sober grandeur on all this short-lived bloom. In old times, every merchant of any consideration in Reval removed to his booth in the fair, and old customers were welcomed to old goods; and though the one was not less dear, nor the other less difficult, yet both buyer and seller equally enjoyed the gaiety of the time, and were satisfied with this social gain. But now Reval mankind is becoming soberer, and by tacit consent it has been agreed that as no superiority in the goods, nor accession in the demand, accompanies this change of place, it is as well to leave the merchandise in its place on the counter, instead of flaunting it forth beneath the old trees in the churchyard. The Jahrmarkt is therefore gradually being abandoned to the travelling merchants from countries widely severed, who peregrinate from one mart to another, and, save the same sovereign, own no social element or bond in common. Here were Russians with their Siberian furs, and Bulgarians with their Turkish clothes, and Tula merchants with their cutlery—all infinitely more interesting to the foreigner than the wares they displayed. And before his booth lolled the sleepy Tartar, with flat face, and high cheek-bones, and little eyes which opened and shut on his customers with a languor and expression often absent from orbs of twice the dimensions—and beside him paced the grave Armenian, with long nose and high-peaked forehead and searching glance—neither comprehending the other, and both accosting me in Russian scarce superior to mine own. "The *Sudarina* is no *Nyemka*," "the Signora is no German," said the shrewd Armenian — *Nyemki*, or the dumb, being the appellation given to the first German settlers, whose ignorance of

Russian reduced them to a compulsory silence, and since bestowed on the whole nation—"Whence does the *Sudarina* come?" "*Ya Anglichanka*," "I am an Englishwoman," I replied; an avowal abroad, like that of a patrician name at home, never otherwise than agreeable to make, and, thinking to increase his respect, added, "and my home is two thousand wersts off." "*Eto nichavo*," that's nothing," said the Armenian, with a smile not unmixed with disdain, "my wife and children live six thousand wersts hence." Nor is this by any means an extreme case—the Petersburg post penetrates to inland homes fourteen thousand wersts removed from the monarch's residence.

This Jahrmarkt is the morning lounge—Catherinthal the evening promenade. It may be as well to mention here, that this latter resort is an imperial *Lustschloss*, or summer palace, surrounded with fine trees and well-kept grounds, or what is here termed "*ein superber Park*," which every evening during six weeks in the summer are thronged with fashionable groups like our Zoological Gardens on a Sunday. This residence, which is literally a bower of verdure redeemed from a waste of sand, is the pleasant legacy of Peter the Great to the city of Reval. Being a frequent visitor to Reval, it was here that he first erected a modest little house beneath the rocks of the Laaksberg, from the windows of which he could overlook his infant fleet riding at anchor in the bay, and which still exists. But a few years previous to his death, the present palace, within a stone's throw of his Dutch house,—for all Peter the Great's own private domiciles testify whence he drew his first ideas of comfort,—was constructed, which he surrounded with pleasure-grounds, and presented to his consort by the name of Catherinthal. This gift he increased by the purchase of surrounding estates to the value of several millions of roubles* —sufficient to have assured to the empress, in case of need, a fitting retreat from the frowns of Russian fortune. These estates have been gradually alienated and bestowed on private individuals, and Catherinthal is reduced to little more than its gardens. It has been the temporary sojourn of all the crowned heads of Russia in succession; and the treaty of peace concerning Silesia, between the two most powerful women of coeval times whom the world has ever known—Maria Theresa of Austria and Catherine II. of Russia—was here ratified in 1746.

Nevertheless, whoever prefers the sweet influences of Nature, uninterrupted by silks and satins, and uniforms and noisy music, must visit Catherinthal in the early morning, when a sweeter spot for the enjoyment of solitude, or of that better happiness, a congenial mind, heart, and taste, cannot be desired. It seems that beneath this dry surface of sand the trees have found a rich soil, for vegetation is here of the utmost southern luxuriance, and the thick mat of foliage around and above only reveals occasional glimpses of the grey rocks or line of blue sea beyond. Or, if you wish to break from this thicket, you have only to climb a rugged path up the rocks, whence all this verdure is seen wreathed in rich festoons at your feet, and above this luxuriant green carpet lies Reval with its spires and towers in stripes of varying light and shade—the proud Domberg rising like a gigantic citadel, or Gothic Acropolis, in the midst: while half surrounding the city spreads the cool placid sea, and little tongues of land carry the abodes of man far into the waters, and deep bays carry the waters high into the shores: and the eye quits towers and domes for masts and shrouds, and further still rests on a solitary fortress insulated in the sea—the last bond between the crowded city and the huge men-of-war lying beyond. And behind all

* The Russian rouble, like the German florin, is a piece of money only current in the imagination, there being no coin of this value in actual circulation. It tallies with the franc in amount, and is worth ten pence, though at this time the rate of exchange is much against the traveller, and every rouble costs him eleven pence and upwards. The silver rouble is a distinct coin, and is worth three roubles and a half.

are the misty islands of the Baltic; and above all a midsummer morning sky, hazy with growing heat, and speckled with a few lazy clouds.

But after having gazed your fill—after having drank deep of the beauties of earth and sky—how sweeter far it is to turn to a countenance whose features never pall, and whose loveliness knows no winter—to eyes, by turns soft with emotion, or brilliant with intellect, where the deepest shade of sorrow is ever cheered by a gleam of playfulness, and the brightest mood of merriment chastened by a shade of sentiment; and which now turn, as if spell-bound, to claim and render back those speechless looks of affection for which Nature's richest array has no equivalent! Such moments are the diamonds in the dark mine of memory—such looks, the stars which forsake us not when life's other suns are set.

After such a morning as this, who would wish to see this hallowed ground desecrated by training-grounds and jingling spurs? No!—Earth has nothing better to offer; and now the sea becomes the element of our desire. A few courteous words therefore to some *Flott-officier* of our acquaintance place a Russian brig-boat at our disposal, and descending the harbour-pier, we launch into the deep, bearing with us some of those bright eyes and witty tongues which I have feebly described as the *points d'appui* in Reval society; and ere we have quitted the land's warm atmosphere, both are in such active play, that the young lieutenant who has the command of the boat, and the elderly general who has the charge of the party, both equally forget their vocation. But nothing is said that might not be uttered anywhere, or would not be enjoyed everywhere; while in the peals of laughter which ring along the silent waters, one voice, in which the very soul of mirth seems articulated, vibrates above every other, and the rocks of the Laaksberg, or the lofty façade of St. Brigitta's convent, rising boldly from the waves, send back the merry echoes, and there is not a stroller on the shore but may recognise beyond all doubt that Baron C. is of this aquatic party. Even the sailors catch the infection, and brush their coarse sleeves across their faces as much to conceal their laughter as to wipe away the streaming perspiration. Otherwise there was little pleasurable to them in this expedition. Several of the rowers were Estonians lately drafted into the navy, and as yet unable to comprehend the loud Russian vociferations of a tyrannical boatswain, as often prefaced as seconded by blows. Poor men! the spectacle of their hard lives checked many a bright laugh.

Before returning to our homes we visited one of the Russian men-of-war which lay without the harbour, and ascending the ship's side were politely received by the officer on guard. Unfortunately I know too little of the interior of an English ship of corresponding rank to offer any comparisons; nor would those of a woman at best be greatly desirable. To all appearance there was cleanliness and comfort; and the sailors, or sea-soldiers as they might be better termed, for they differ but little from those on land save in the colour of their clothes, were loitering and talking together in cheerful groups between decks.

But now the roll of the drum was heard, and numbers hastened to the evening drill on deck—a necessary portion of a sailor's routine on a sea hardly navigable six months in the year—at the conclusion of which, the drummer, a wild-looking little Circassian, in a piebald uniform which assorted well with his dark tints and flashing eyes, commanded attention with a lengthened roll, and then in nearly as monotonous a sound repeated the Lord's Prayer in Russian, as fast as his tongue would permit—this being a part of the service—and with this the body broke up. Among the groups our well-practised eyes sought and found many an Estonian physiognomy, and passing the sentinel at the gangway, who bore the very shepherd on his countenance, one of our arch companions whispered "*Yummal aga.*' A ray of pleasure shot over the poor man's face, though his body remained immoveable as the beam at his side.

LETTER THE NINETEENTH.

Excessive heat—Gnats and gnat-bites—Sleepless nights—Ruins of Padis Kloster—Landrath R. Baltisport—Leetz—The Island of Little Rogö—Unexpected encounter—Russian builders—A day in the woods—Family parties—Mode of salutation—Old-fashioned manners—Conversation—English pride and German pride—Jealousy of Russian tendencies—Marriages between Russians and Estonians.

THE summer is come, and the summer is going. Our longest day has blazed itself out, and an unconscionably long day it was, though I knew as little of its ending as of its beginning. Every creature is busy in the hayfield, including all the men-servants, and even some supernumerary maids, who think this change of work as good as play;—I proposed the same to my Sascha, but was checked by a mute look of dignity—and all reminds us to make haste, and bustle about our own haycocks of various denominations, before this fleet-winged season be gone for ever. But as fast as the fine weather urges, the intolerable heat forbids, exertion; and here, while every thought of the community centres in ingenious devices for protection from cold, no one dreams of taking precautions against the heat. Thus the summer, like a rare visitor, is made much of—welcomed with open arms, caressed and flattered, and even so little as a thin blind grudged between you and the sudden ardour of its friendship;—while winter, the good old constant family friend, who silently prepares the harvest which summer only reaps, is slandered in its absence, snubbed in its presence, and has doors and windows slammed in its face by high and low without ceremony. What is worse, no one here has any sympathy for a foreigner whose clay was never intended to stand this baking. If I say I am hot, they tell me I ought to be happy;—if I complain I can't sleep, I'm answered, it's a shame to lie in bed while the sun is high in the heavens;—and if I show my burning gnat-bites, a fit of laughter ensues, or, among the better behaved, a compliment on my English *süsses blut*, or sweet blood, which seems thus in request. I would compound with the incessant light and heat if it were not for these tormenting accompaniments. But capricious summer says, Love me, love my gnats; and no one thinks of lifting a hand against these sacred emblems. In Sascha, however, I find one sympathizing heart—she won't make hay with her pretty dimpled hands, but she won't let the gnats bite them either. Therefore, as soon as the vapours of evening begin to arise, I hear my windows' fastening sound, and then, slap, slap goes the pretty hand, and the first word that greets me on entering my room for the night is "*Komar nietto*"—no gnats. To bed therefore I go with the happy consciousness of possessing a servant who can equally mend my gloves, correct my speech, and kill my gnats, and, if possible, infuse a kinder tone than usual into my *prostchai*, or farewell for the night.

Scarcely, however, have her retiring footsteps died in the distance, than whiz, whiz—goes something in my ear; and after the first bustle of defence has subsided, there I spy the miscreant standing on his long legs just beyond my reach. "Well, Sascha must have overlooked one!" so, him despatched, I sink down again more secure than ever. And soon my senses fall into a delicious kind of nether state, and then one by one begin to steal away, that of hearing being the last to desert its post. And now, strange to say, I am walking upon the dusty high road, carrying the very bundle of linen

under my arm which Sascha was working upon the day before, and stop at an old castle with magnificent high walls, and a row of arched cloisters adjoining, and all close to our own dwelling, though I never observed them before. But all the architectural ornaments alter strangely as I approach them—some look like horses' heads, and others like pewter basins, and it becomes so dark I can hardly grope about, and though I entered the castle conveniently enough by a wide door, I can hardly squeeze myself through the same on returning. And all this time my bundle is greatly in my way, and still I get no nearer home; when suddenly before me stands Sammucka, the Russian coachman, with a strange kind of round hat upon his head, turning a grindstone—whirl, whirl,—what a noise that grindstone makes! and pieces fly off red hot and fall among my hair, and on to my cheek, and I stand rooted to the spot without the power to stir. And then the noise subsides, and then increases again louder than ever, whirl, whirl,—whiz, whiz,—and, starting up, Sammucka, grindstone, castle, bundle, all disappear, and in their place remains a fresh gnat-bite, burning like a volcano in the very centre of my cheek. Thus the night passes, and when towards morning I am hoping to retrieve some of my miseries, pat comes a fly with its cold wet proboscis on my forehead, and another on my chin, and as fast as I chase them away they return, and half a dozen quarrel on my very nose. In short, I rise no more refreshed than I laid down; and I am always put off with praises of their summer, and warnings of its temporary duration; though were it only ten days long, I tell them I must sleep.

These are a most venomous kind of gnat, and might more rightly be termed musquitoes; and, what is worse, you never know when the fire of these little craters is to subside—an accidental rub will set one of a month old burning beyond all endurance. The farther north you go, the more do they swarm. In the short blistering reign of a Siberian summer, no one can go without a mask, and the Laplanders live in smoke to be rid of them. Heaven defend me from such summers; their winters I never complained of.

But to return to subjects of more interest—we have resumed our researches after the ancient and the picturesque. Accident had brought to our knowledge the existence of the ruins of *Padis Kloster*, a name of frequent recurrence in Estonian history; and as it cost only a drive of nineteen wersts to ascertain that which no other taste could determine, the Speise Korb was packed up, and ourselves soon seated beneath the shade of as fine a ruin as Estonia can offer, with every adjunct of old moat, and contemporary tree, and that air of grandeur which clings to a spot after its worldly importance and less picturesque repair have declined. This monastery is mentioned as such in the beginning of the fourteenth century, when, owing to starvation without its walls, and doubtless a very comfortable life within, the peasants rose in numbers around, murdered the abbot and twenty-eight of the monks, and otherwise so devastated the place, that, in 1448, it received a further and full consecration at the hands of Heinrich, Baron Üxküll, Bishop of Reval, at which time it was ordained that whoever should in any way enrich or benefit this *Kloster* of Padis, should, for any sins he might commit, have forty days of penance struck off. Hence perhaps arose the peculiar repute and custom in the sale of indulgences which this monastery enjoyed. Now, however, it stands utterly forgotten, and the stranger within its gates was infinitely a greater object of interest to the passers by than all the mute lessons, moral, historical, or picturesque, of its grey stones.

One mode of rescuing it from oblivion, of fair promise, however, lies in the circumstance of its present proprietor, Landrath R., having been blessed within sight of its ruins with a family of three and twenty children; who, born in a house infinitely too confined to be conveniently the theatre of this domestic fecundity, have successfully stretched their six and forty little legs in innocent sports within its walls, to

the unspeakable relief of their Frau Mamma, and to their own great physical advantage. The name of Padis Kloster may therefore safely calculate on being bequeathed in grateful odour to a wide-spreading generation, which, mayhap, may prove a shorter process than that of awakening a taste for historical antiquity among the Estonian nobility; who, though sufficiently removed in period, are still too nearly allied to various feudal manners and customs to attach to them any poetic sentiment. Some call it the wilful blindness of the human mind ever to prefer bygone times to the present, but it may rather be termed a most exquisite provision of Nature which leads us to respect the past like the memory of the dead, and retain of it only what is beautiful and good.

From Padis Kloster, a short journey brought us on to Baltisport, a small seaport never before acknowledged in the range of my geography, about fifty wersts south of Reval, where vessels land their cargoes before the ice admits them higher, and whence thousands of orange and lemon casks are transported by land on to St. Petersburg. The whole range of coast in this direction consists of an elevated table-land descending with magnificent precipitous cliffs into the sea. In some parts these cliffs are four hundred feet in height, shelving inwards, while the waves roar at their bases, and chafe round huge angular masses of rock which have detached themselves from above. In others, the sea retreating has left a little moist strip of rich land, bound in between the cliffs and its shores, where vegetation of a southern luxuriance is found, and where the black alder, the only fit substitute for the oak, appears in unrivalled splendour. This sheltered breadth forms part of an estate called Leetz, in the possession of M. de Ramm, whose house, a small wooden building, with a peculiarly peaked roof, "high up to the top," as a Russian surveyor with loyal accuracy once reported of a crown chimney, evinces both the taste and moral courage of his predecessors, for it is built on a rising slope in full view of the sea and of every other beauty.

Upon the highest ground, near Baltisport, stands a lighthouse of great importance in navigation, which here, owing to the many islands crowding the coast, is of considerable difficulty. This circumstance is supposed to have deterred Peter the Great from placing his capital on this part of the coast. Catherine II., however, thought much of Baltisport, and projected a harbour of unrivalled depth and magnitude, by uniting the coast by a gigantic mole to the island of Rogö, three wersts off. But something intervened to stop the work, and nothing is now visible but a restless line of water, where whole mountains of stones have been sunk, and a beautiful mass of masonry butting from the cliff, which the winds and weather have tempered to much the same tints. Baltisport is a wretched little fishing town, with only a Russian church for its mingled population—though a pious baron is about to erect a Lutheran one,—and in summer is visited by a few of the neighbouring families for its excellent bathing.

It was bombarded by the English in 1803, who, by the time they had unroofed one house, which still remains a monument of injured innocence, discovered that the inhabitants would be rather glad to welcome them than not. Accordingly they landed, and became very good friends with the little community, who, to do them justice, have never forgotten that their invaders observed that humanity which few of their own allies would have done, viz., paid handsomely for all they took. Baltisport is famous for its *strömlings*, with which the atmosphere seems impregnated; and has further distinguished itself by a petition to government, of rather a rare nature, *i. e.* to be allowed to *sink into obscurity*,—the rights of a township, which Catherine II. bestowed on it, being too expensive an honour to keep up.

As the weather continued fine, and the time spent in viewing general scenery hangs heavy on hand, an excursion was proposed to the neighbouring island, three wersts off, which had thus narrowly escaped a junction with the main land. After rowing half an

hour we landed on a flat stony shore, and, leaving our boat, wandered into the country. This islet, called the Little Rogö, is about six wersts in circumference, and lies opposite the Great Rogö, about three times the size; both of which, in former times, belonged to Padis Kloster, and as early as 1345 were pledged to four noblemen for the sum of thirty marks of silver. On this little platform are two villages with well-cultivated corn-fields, and boulder-stones of such enormous size that we mistook them for ruined towers in the distance. But nothing remains of the forests which, from the reservation of "timber for building," among other rights retained by the monastery, are implied to have existed. It so happened that M. de Ramm, to whom this islet now belongs, had been collecting his dues this very day. At the first village, therefore, we came in for the results of a feast—in other words, all the Little Rogö world was very drunk. Strange to say, this half-hour's transition had ushered us into another language, for Swedish is spoken here, with a little Estonian. Our party was not able to profit by either, for Russian and Lettish were all the northern tongues that could be mustered between us. Our communication was therefore restrained to looks, good-tempered as theirs, and I trust a little more intelligent. Returning to the beach and indulging in a little English to my dear companion, after doing duty in German all the day, we observed a venerable old fisherman eyeing us with great attention, and, setting foot into the boat, to our great astonishment he tottered up to us, and, laying one brown hand on my arm, emphatically said, "God bless you, tell me, are you really English?" His amazement could hardly surpass our own at hearing English tones in this remote spot. He had left his tiny native land to see the world, and served in the English merchant-service thirty-two years. His wife had followed him, and resided at Deptford during his peregrinations. And now the old couple were returned to their wild island to end their days. Strange transition! but the love of home, begun in childhood, flies off during the busy prime of life, and returns to bear old age company. The old man had still English habits about him—he was neat, and clean-shaven, and, pointing to his fishing habiliments, said, "Ah! I am dirty now, but I have clean clothes at my cottage, and an English Bible and other books." He helped to shove us off, and then stood looking after us, and that distant island now claimed an affinity with us which we had never anticipated.

Returning home, the heat of the weather again brought lassitude on man and beast, and our days were only varied by a walk, fore and after noon, to the recreating waters of a neighbouring stream; pausing on our way to talk with the groups of Russians who lay reclining after their work beneath the shade of a half-erected building.* The Russian is a builder by nature; the little hatchet in his hand is the emblem of his life. No buildings are here undertaken by Estonian workmen, but these Russians wander the country in quest of work, and are engaged from one estate to another. They were greatly interested in hearing something of that remote island *Anglia*, and only wondered how we could build there without Russians! Courtesy pervades every class; the Russian serf takes off his *fouraschka* with the dignity of a prince, and waits on a lady with the devotion of a slave. Though the tones of the lower orders may be broader, yet they are native grammarians, and speak the language with perfect purity. Hence I generally profited by these humble teachers, and returned home with new words to spite Sascha. Then towards eight o'clock the droschky appears at the door, and we drive where we list—into the meadows, which are like vast flower-beds of the gayest colours,—for nowhere have I seen a wild botany of such beauty as here, where flowers which we rear in gardens, the blue campanula, and the justly-named

* However hot the summer of Estonia, it is almost invariably accompanied by a brisk wind—so much so, that Kotzebue remarked that instead of *Esthland*, it were better termed *Windland*.

Siberian larkspur, bloom in native luxuriance;—and peasant children meet us with curious baskets made of birch-bark, filled with wild strawberries and raspberries, better than any cultivated fruit I have here tasted, and ten kopecks* buy fruit, basket, and all;—or we take a natural *chaussée* into the woods, and there alighting wander about under vast trunks of Scotch and spruce fir, whose gnarled boughs and slow-grown strength defy the climate, and which it seems a sacrilege to fell for firewood. But though the forests have much given way before human encroachment, they are safe for many years to come. The estate on which we stood is so richly provided with wood, that only an eightieth portion is yearly felled for building, firing, and other purposes, so that, by the time a third generation comes round to the division which the first cleared, another old forest is there before them.

One morning, for "*die Morgenstunde hat Gold im Munde*," I emerged at an earlier hour from beneath a muslin canopy which furnishes some protection from my tormentors, and drove by six o'clock to a wood five wersts off, accompanied only by my faithful attendant, who thrives uncommonly on the air and exercise she partakes with me. Our way led through dense woods of a younger growth, whose pliant boughs opened to the horses' heads and closed again after we had passed, and where, excepting the bush-ranger's cottage, which stood on a little island of meadow separating two mighty sweeps of forest, we left all signs of human habitation more than half-way behind us. Dismissing the droschky, we dived into the depths of one of these, nor stopped until completely hemmed in by a vast green-roofed cavern, supported on irregular pillars of every size and form;—some of them splendid erect monsters, who had never wavered in their sturdy course upwards—others slender drooping scions, falling in graceful lines across their veteran companions, as if demanding aid in the giddy ascent. This was a wood of mingled trees, the fresh hues of the oak contrasting with the black pines; and close to us stood a noble spruce, split from tip to base by the lightning of last week's storm—one half resting against a neighbouring stem—the other pale, bleeding, and still erect. Below lay forty feet of the luxuriant head, with enormous splinters, rent in longitudinal lines, while the ground was furrowed in deep angular troughs by the last strength of the fluid. Here was heaven's doom dealt in a moment, but farther on lay the victims of slower thunderbolts; for the wood was strewn with cairns of moss-grown stones, through some of which the trees had forced their way, which showed where a plague-smitten body rested. There was something indescribably touching in this union of present life, movement, verdure, and luxuriance, with the reminiscences of human suffering and corruption; here and there the sun shooting across a silver birch trunk, like the light across a liquid human eye, or illuminating the red bark of a veteran Scotch fir with a fiercer glow, or stealing few and far between in slender bars of gold along the tender grass. But seldom did a short glance pierce to the bases of these giant stems, or visit the grave of the long-shunned and now long-forgotten sufferer.

Sounds were as scarce here as sunbeams—for in this birdless country no wing brushed the air, and no feathered throat swelled with melody; and only the distant bell of the straying cattle tinkled faintly at intervals through the covert. Our very voices startled us as we moved on through the mute activity of Nature; now sitting for hours on one green tuft, now seeking fresh pictures in the ever-varied repetition of this sylvan scene. And was the heart thus lonely thrown on Nature's sympathy? No; far from it—dear friends were thought of without that withering sense of separation which too often accompanies the noisier fellowship of a crowded room. Here, where there was nought to remind, all was calmly remembered, and memory opened her sad and sacred stores, free from the teasing importunities of harassing associations.

* Ten kopecks are equivalent to one penny.

Other objects illustrative of the scenery of these woods are the number of ant-hills—not little mounds which a foot could disturb, but large and conical as a good-sized haycock—the ants themselves an inch long, on the same colossal scale as their dwellings. To erect these, the stump of a tree, here generally hewn three feet from the ground, is pitched upon, which, being gradually minced up into the finest particles by these indefatigable creatures, crumbles itself into a conical form, and with the accumulation of labour and life assumes the size I have described. Here the ants swarm in a red-black coating all the summer, and in winter retire deep within. They are harmless creatures, however, and carefully shunned us.

It was noon before the flight of time had been missed, and, alternately intent on my book, or gazing at the blue rents of sky which broke the dark mosaic of the branches overhead, the figure of my Sascha wandering up and down in a pensive attitude had been too perfectly in accordance with the scene to draw my attention; when, coming to my side, she falteringly owned to me the hopeless loss of—*her thimble*. Most pathetically did she aver that not above half a werst off she had it safe on her little round finger, counting for nothing, in her patient search, the millions of leaves and blades intervening, any one of which would effectually have concealed it. So there we left it to its hidden grave—a little atom of civilization dropped in the wild forest lap, to sink deeper and deeper beneath the alternate layers of snow and leaves of succeeding seasons,—and ourselves returned to the world whence we had come.

The day, commenced thus stilly, concluded in a large family-party at a neighbouring residence. By the word *family-party*, I must beg not to be understood one of those rude, indecorous gatherings—those social Babels of our native land, where brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews, and nieces meet together to banter, tease, and laugh; but an orderly meeting of courteous individuals, who know what befits their dignity, and are above taking advantage of the bonds of relationship to indulge in any promiscuous levity!—fie upon it! Even the very furniture partakes of the general feeling;—hard stuffed, bright polished, and richly carved, there is no indelicate straying about the rooms like our loose-mannered, depraved, forward generation, who come before they are called; but each stands austerely in its place, and waits to be sought. The ladies curtsey, the gentlemen bow, and sometimes a fair hand is reverently kissed, while the lady—for such is the peculiar custom both here and in Russia—is expected to dive down and imprint a chaste salute on the extreme confine of the cheek, or very tip of the ear, or any other part of the gentleman's physiognomy thus employed which her lips can reach. This requires some practice to do gracefully, for, what with impatience on the one hand and bashfulness on the other, or perhaps awkwardness on both, two heads have been known to come together harder than was quite agreeable. Nevertheless this is looked upon by the gentlemen as their undoubted perquisite; and I have seen a pretty foreign woman gravely reprimanded by her dull Estonian lord for hesitating to comply. It would be hard to say what grade of relationship or exigency of circumstance would compel an Estonian nobleman to forget that he is not to be at his ease, according to our western notions of such. On the other hand, to a lover of antiquity, this living representation of bygone manners is highly interesting. At every moment I am reminded of some trait which increasing luxury and increasing retrenchment have equally conspired to banish from our soil. Here every country gentleman keeps open house, and no account is taken of how many mouths there are to fill, whether in hall, kitchen, or stable. The houses are vast, grand, and incommodious, and countless hangers-on and dependants supply the economy of steps by a superfluity of feet. The seigneurs here never move about with less than four horses and often six,—rusty equipments it is true;—but it is a mistake

to imagine that the coaches and four of our ancestors were marked by the same neatness and finish which now attend the commonest pair; or that their neighbourly meetings were distinguished by that ease, sociability, and intellect which render the English society of the present day so delightful. On the contrary, as soon as the scanty topics of the day were exhausted, they all sat down to cards, and that perhaps by broad daylight, like too many of the Estonian gentlemen. Then, as now here, all natural products were plentiful and cheap, and all artificial objects scarce and dear; and the manners to correspond were hospitable in the main, but rigidly formal in detail. Manners, however, must be looked upon as an art, which, before it can be easy and safe, must be stiff and cautious—such are the necessary transitions of all other schools, and no less of this. In this light I respect these formal old worthies, whose study it seems equally to give me a hearty welcome and keep me at respectful distance, like the translated souls of my great grandfathers and grandmothers, —and take true delight in their venerable society; and if a profane weariness of mind and body do occasionally surprise me while sitting on a hard chair, and drilling my thoughts and figure to the starch standard of rectitude around me, be sure I ascribe it solely and entirely to my own corrupt condition, and to the incorrigible lolling propensities of my nature both moral and physical.

Another characteristic of this formal school, as worthy of imitation as note, is the fact that family quarrels are things utterly unknown here, and that none of that undue precedence is given to wealth as in countries more advanced. All those born in a certain station retain it, whether their means be adequate or not, and are admitted into society with no reference as to whether they can return the obligation. Otherwise I do not believe the real morality of the community in any way advanced by their rigid outward decorum. Like people who first peal their apple and then eat the paring, it comes to the same thing in the end. Consistent with the spirit of an old picture, they bend all their attention to the minutiæ of a fold, and neglect the first principles of perspective. Harmless freedoms are controlled with bars of iron, while, from the facility of divorce, and other laxities which the Lutheran religion allows, many a sin walks in broad daylight, without so much as a cobweb over it.

The class upon whom this prohibition of harmless freedoms, or in other words this chain upon natural spirits, falls heaviest, is that of the unfortunate little Estonian young ladies. Children of all ages are here palmed upon all society, greatly to mutual inconvenience. On entering a room full of company, the eye is caught by numbers of these half-way little women, with smooth tied hair and stiffened peaked figures, behung with gold brooches and ear-rings, and all the miniature paraphernalia of their mothers; who lead a miserable nomade life—wandering from room to room, with no place sacred from or to them; and are constantly being reminded, from four years of age and upwards, to be *weiblich*. If I held out my hand, they made me a disgusting little curtsey; if I ventured upon any approaches to play, they wondered what I was about. Oh! for the bright vision of a truly lovely English child, seldom seen and then cordially welcomed; who hastens forward to some grown-up playmate, trips over stools, turns up carpet-corners, and, arriving with ruffled locks and shortened breath, and with both her little hands fumbling in yours, can't at first perhaps utter a word for bashfulness! There may be some policy in breaking in children here thus early; but my heart bled for these little buckram countesses and baronesses, and I only trust that the moment our backs were turned they took to their heels and loosened all their little joints.

The conversation turned on the visit of the heir of Russia to England, and an ingenious little German romance was spun out by some grave grey-heads as to the probabilities of his falling in love with our Queen—her returning the flame—and the miseries of a hope-

less passion; the piece ending with the grave question as to which of the august pair should renounce their inheritance. Of course it was soon decided which crown was to be abandoned, for the mere circumstance of a reigning queen is a sore point with the Estonians, who spend much virtuous indignation upon this supposed subversion of Nature's law, and are, I fear, prepared to hold their meek spouses with a tighter rein, lest forsooth they should follow the same example. Altogether many politic and wise provisions derived from our excellent constitution, which to us are truths familiar from childhood, are here made subjects of vehement altercation. The dignity and pre-eminence of our church—the law of primogeniture—the transmission of titles through the female line—the policy which preserves to a peeress her own dignity, be her husband the lowest commoner in the land—and the courtesy which permits every woman of rank upon marrying to retain the distinction of her birth, unless she merge it in a higher—are here all subjects which are submitted to the test of German reasoning, and declared unsound in the eye of Nature. Very erroneous notions are here also entertained as to the inordinate pride and undue prerogatives of the English nobility; forgetting that, when the titles and honours centre in one head only, the other members of the same family return to the middle walks of life, filling our professions with individuals whose sense of noble descent is the highest stimulus to honourable exertion; and who thus form a social link between the highest nobleman and the great body of the nation. And though far be the day when the English nobility should enjoy no prerogatives of birth, yet where can these be less galling than in that country where distinguished abilities may elevate any man to the highest offices in the state, and a sullied reputation keep any duchess from court? On this head no German may throw a stone at England. Earls without earldoms, barons without baronies; their titles unsupported by political consequence, and diluted to utter insignificance by the numbers who bear the same—their jealousy of rank increasing in proportion to its diminution,—no nobility hedges itself so carefully beneath a vexatious, trumpery spirit of exclusiveness, which is as absurd in itself as it is galling to those beneath them. In Russia no one may advance in the military service, in Estonia no one may purchase an estate, and in Weimar no one may enter the theatre by a particular door, who has not a *de* prefixed to his name; and these are only a few of the countless privileges with which they endeavour to bolster out an empty title, and exclude those who are often their betters in education, wealth, and refinement. As to that class of society peculiar to England—the aristocracy without title, the representatives of long-descended estates—the old squirearchy of the land, who often prefer the battered gold of their ancient family name to the bright brass of a new distinction,—this was a subject so incomprehensible, a paradox so preposterous, that for my own credit's sake I gave up the task of elucidating it.

Another subject of considerable interest discussed this evening was the gradual encroachment of Russian tendencies upon the German provinces, and the fear of a future consolidation with Russia, as well in manners as in allegiance. Nor is this apprehension groundless. These provinces, though possessed of an honourable internal administration, have never been able to maintain their own independence against the many competitors for them. Natural position assigns them to the dominion and protection of Russia; and the desire of generalising his system of government is as natural in the Emperor as that of retaining their nationality is in them. Their propinquity is in itself one main road to assimilation; and the late ordinances requiring the study of the Russian language in all schools, universities, &c., of these provinces, and establishing it as an article of examination prior to preferment, though met by much justifiable resistance, are not otherwise than fair, considering the number of Estonian and Livonian youths who find promotion

in the civil and military services of Russia. On the other hand, it is the general remark that the best and most favoured officers in both these departments are drawn from these provinces. Another ordinance which particularly gives rise to murmurs is that compelling all children of a Russian parent, whether father or mother, to be of the Greek religion, *i. e.* so long as resident in Russia itself. From the frequent intermarriages of Estonians and Russians, this ukase has been more particularly the means of introducing Russian habits into the heart of Lutheran families. This may, however, be looked upon in an utterly different light, and, instead of encouraging the here deprecated march of union between the two countries, ought to act as a direct check. Those who now marry Russian wives do it with their eyes open as to the consequences; and as a regard for their own religion does not seem to counterbalance the temptation of a larger fortune than their Lutheran countrywomen can bring, no commiseration is due.

But now adieu to politics—the life in the forest under the greenwood tree is more to my taste.

LETTER THE TWENTIETH.

Fall and its beauties—The daughters of Fall—The Countess-mother—A gathering of all nations—Cuisine—Occupations—Varieties of scenes and languages—The château—Its various treasures—Russian church—In-door beauties and out-door beauties—Count C. and Princess V.—Salmon-fishing—Illuminations—Adventurous passage—Countess Rossi—Armen-Concert at Reval—Rehearsals—The Scena from the Freischütz—Return home.

Who would imagine that this good, honest, fertile Estonia—this stronghold of old-fashioned decorum—this formal, straight-walked nursery of clipped thyme and rosemary—nourishes a pool of bitter waters in its centre, a traitor within its gates, a canker at its very root?—That in this precise, decorous province is reared a pavilion of luxury—a private theatre of fashion—a saloon of modern manners, owning no bounds but the invisible ring-fence of refinement, where all is ease, taste, expense, and indulgence—"all nature and all art?" Fall, the earthly name of this enchanted castle, is a residence in praise of whose natural beauties and artificial decorations everybody has expatiated to me since my domiciliation in this province. But accounts of beautiful scenery are so relative to the mind of the describer—so oft have I found "*une belle étable*" the standard of admiration here, while, on the other hand, my own taste, from sundry liberties it has taken in discovering beauties where, according to established rule and tradition, none had ever been known to exist, is become so very questionable,—that politeness on the one side now describes without one solitary hope of conversion, and politeness on the other now listens without one distant vision of gratification. But in the case of Fall I confess the wickedness of unbelief, and only wish I were oftener so punished. This is one of those favoured spots where Nature has compressed every imaginable beauty together, fitting them closer than, abstractedly considered, would be deemed pleasing; though, once presented to the view, criticism has nothing more to say.

Fall is in the possession of Count B., the man who, after the Emperor, wears the diadem in Russia. Here he has secured to his family a retreat from the world, or what might be so did not the world follow them faster than they can retreat;—in other words, a summer residence, where that most luxurious of all luxurious existences—one equally commanding the healthy gifts of the country and the lively gifts of the capital—is as well understood and practised as in our own land. A week spent in this charming spot is sufficient to make the evidence of the senses doubtful. It is not Estonia—that 's quite sure; it is not Russia—here is no disorder; nor France—though the echoes answer in French numbers; nor England—though as like that as any. What is it, then? Where are you?—In beautiful, delicious, unique Fall—the garden of Nature—the *pot pourri* of all nations—the quintessence of all tastes; where the courtier, the philosopher, the lover of nature, the votary of fashion, the poet, the artist, the man of sense, or the man of nonsense, may all be happy in their own way.

Count B. was not unmindful of the effect and power of contrast in selecting a residence, for miles round which the eye is wearied by the monotony of one of the dullest and flattest plains in Estonia,—where even a river, that foil to all dull landscapes, sulks gloomily along, spreading itself over marshes it cannot beautify, and hiding itself behind rushes and sedges it cannot hide; till, viewing lofty banks rising in the

distance, and graceful trees leaning pendent to caress it, it gathers its forces together, and cuts its way along with increasing willingness. And now all the beauties of an Alpine scene mirror themselves tremblingly on its ribbed and rapid surface, and light, airy bridges, fit for fairies' feet to cross, o'erleap it with their slender span,—and groves of blooming orange-trees, and every other incense-breathing flower, perfume its banks—and, in the gladness of his heart, the river-god flings himself, in a bound of joy, down a thundering cascade, rounding the edges of peaked and jagged rocks in a veil of oily transparency, and hiding their blackened bases in clouds of foam. Thence, dashing forward in many a changing, wreathing circle, its agitated fragments reflect for a moment the light Italian château, or ancient ruin, or classic temple,—or repeat in quivering lines the white flowing dresses and gay uniforms of some wandering group, till, gradually abating from its wild career, the stream winds heavier along, and, steering slower and slower to its final fate, quits the landscape, of which it had enhanced the every beauty, to spend its puny waters on the wide breast of the Baltic. From this cascade, or *fall*, the German name for this estate is derived; but the Estonian one of Yoala, though less significant, is more harmonious.

There is something in the air of Fall which gives beauty to every living thing on its surface. Owing to the position of the hills, and the vicinity of the sea, spring is here earlier, and autumn later, and all vegetation wears a correspondingly grateful aspect. Not only do the oak and beech flourish with English luxuriance, but trees foreign to this soil, the chestnut, the sycamore, the plane, here abide the "bitter nip of frost;" while velvet lawns, green and fresh as the banks of Thames, encircle the bases of the high *Bergrücke*, or mountain-backs, or ridges, whose woods, assuming a more arctic nature as they stretch upwards, fence in this happy valley with a battalion of hardy pines. Nor may the beautifying influence of a Russian summer sky, which may defy comparison with any other in the world, be forgotten.

But why do I longer suppress what is foremost on my lips—why longer tamper with the irresistible desire to challenge any country, any clime, and any nurture, to produce fairer flowers of another and nobler kind than this fitting nursery has reared;—to throw the gauntlet to all the living generations in any known or unknown land, to outshine in beauty the peerless daughters of Fall? Woman's admiration of woman's beauty is more impartial than man's, and not less enthusiastic. Never shall I forget the first moment when these three exquisite creatures stood before me. The eldest, tall, straight, and slender as the glistening birch-stem on her own mountain-side; with skin of wax, and hair of gold lighting like an auréole round her delicately-formed head; and features and dimples like Hebe ere she knew disgrace, and a character of face of the highest aristocratic English style;—beautiful, in short, to her fingers' ends. And then the second, with her scarce nineteen summers, and matron-care already slightly resting on her marble brow, and yet a face like a vestal, with mild, pensive sentiment written on every chiselled feature—pale as alabaster, with tresses which seemed, by the weight of their massive coils, to bow down the stooping head and languid form. Lastly, that sweet youngest! as if Nature to make a third had joined the other two; with character more decided than her scarce ripened charms, and in both distinct from her sister beauties—with the mind to will, and the power to do; and a natural gift of penetration into others' thoughts, and secrecy over her own, lurking behind the loveliest, demurest, most transparent mask of tender beauty (true daughter of the man who knows and *keeps* all the secrets of Russia), which, unless a practised reader in physiognomy be greatly deceived, will make her the most fascinating and dangerous of the lovely trio. Of her an old diplomatist said—"*Jeune comme elle est, Mademoiselle Sophie a déjà le grand art de savoir paroître ce qu'elle*

veut ?"—a rich compliment in his coin; and, so long as the calm remains only in the exterior, and the warmth all within, a very safe one. Alas for those which my fancy had hitherto treasured as models of female beauty! fallen are your sceptres, broken are your crowns! Not even the gilding of remembrance, that natural cosmetic which the mind bestows on all absent favourites, can deck you in colours which may venture comparison with those before me. The world will see and hear of this lovely trefoil, whose charms will probably be transplanted to other countries; but Fall was their proper setting, and few will view them here united again.

These personal advantages are chiefly descended from the Countess-mother, a magnificent woman, with pride and pleasantry contending in her countenance—an Asiatic Mrs. Siddons, and still in the zenith of her charms; but the facial bond between mother and daughter is more of beauty than likeness.

Having no sons, the Count has entailed this residence upon his eldest daughter; but in Russia no entailed estate may descend to a foreigner, and Annette

> "Loves a knight from a far countrie,
> And her lands she will give for one glance of his e'e."

Fall therefore becomes the inheritance of the next sister Princess V.

I arrived at Fall at a fortunate time. The last *pyroskaff* from Reval had just landed a little select colony of high life from Petersburg. There were princes with historical names, ministers with political names, and generals with military names. There was Count ———, the *richard* of Russia, who, "damned to wealth, buys disappointment at immense expense;" and the far-famed beauty, Madame K., whose perverse birth has proved no perversity to her at all; and Countess Rossi, charming and attractive as in her first burst of popularity, accompanied by her stately husband: with other beauties, and other talents and excellencies, both moral and titular, and stars flung on brave breasts by the Emperor of all the Russias,—and others (and oh! how far surpassing!) fixed in fair heads by the King of all kings.

For a private house in a remote province on the Baltic, we sat down daily to dinner as strange a collection of nations as can be imagined. There were Russians, Armenians, Germans, Italians, French, English, Swiss, and Dutch,—to say nothing of the various subdivisions of Estonian, Livonian, Austrian, Prussian, Bavarian,—more than I can remember; and last, and this time least, our ranks dwindled down to a dwarf, who strolled from saloon to anteroom just as he pleased. This was a memento of the olden time, which involuntarily brought with it fears of a corresponding barbarity. Ignatuschka, however, has at all events a happy time of it,—is no more of a buffoon than a shrewd wit, a talent for mimicry, and a due admiration for his own tiny proportions may make him, and is loved and cherished by every member of the family. So much so, indeed, that in sheer gratitude for good cheer and kind treatment, he has within the last few years, though already forty years of age, grown one inch! When all met together, French was the prevailing tongue; and when the groups scattered each relapsed into their own. The *cuisine* was most costly; the groundwork French, with a sprinkling of incomprehensible native dishes, which I ate by faith only; and, in imitation of what here passes for English, half a sheep or half a calf, which had fattened on the milk and honey of Fall, was brought in on a trencher by two staggering mèn-servants, while a renowned minister rose and bowed with mock humility to the steaming comer, and the Count, tucking a napkin over his stars and cordons, stood up and carved the beast,—and, to say the truth, had he hacked it with his sword, he would have done it as well.

The disposal of our time was much the same as with us in England;—in other words, each did as they wished. The Countess bore off a number to inspect her brilliant conservatories, almost a werst in length, her English dairy, &c.; and the Count headed a party of Dons, to view some important

addition to his already forty measured wersts of serpentine paths, and rejoice their hearts with a new composition that *was* to have all the binding qualities of native English gravel; whilst the young and the pretty sat at their embroidery frames in the shade of cool marble terraces, or loitered round graceful vases, or stooped among flowers not fresher nor gayer than they.

Fall has been in the possession of Count B. for about fifteen years; and knowing the former proprietors to be as low in taste as high in worth, it frequently occurred to me what a burnishing this jewel had undergone in this short space of time. For, true to Estonian habits, the old mansion, the Countess assured me, was most curiously placed just where not one beauty of the landscape was visible. My host and hostess greatly regretted not having instituted a visitor's book at the first period of their occupation; for Fall had seen a succession of the noble and gifted, whose autographs would have been an heir-loom of price to future generations. A few years back the present Emperor and Empress honoured them with a visit, and were as much enraptured by the scenery as any of their subjects could be,—leaving a memento of their presence to descend to the future in a tree planted by each. The spades used by the Imperial hands are preserved, and inscribed with the date and occasion. Each is analogous to its wielder—the Empress's a fairy toy, the Emperor's only to be lifted by giant strength. Both the Count and Countess B. had lived through events of great historical interest: of the former more hereafter. The Countess had been twice married, having lost her first husband at the French invasion, when her house also was sacrificed in the destruction of Moscow. Often, in alluding to articles and souvenirs of her early youth, she added with a sigh, "They perished in the flames of Moscow."

Altogether, I never remember such mingled and peculiar associations as I experienced in Fall. Here was one country within another—each as dissimilar as possible; and our every-day life made up of successive scenes of as many periods as nations. There were the Gothic halls, with every gorgeous appurtenance of alcove, stained glass, fretted pillar, oak carving, and mosaic floor; and a few old ladies sat in state in their high-backed chairs, or a couple of gentlemen strutted in the foreground in earnest pantomimic discussion. Then a prince, or general, hurried across the scene, and at the word "*Tchellovek*," or man, equivalent to the "What, ho!" of stage practice, in rushed two or three men-servants from the anteroom; and now and then a messenger, hard-ridden, arrived from court with secret tidings; and even the manners themselves, from the high rank of the individuals, and the occasional familiar handling of mighty names and weighty matters, though modern enough in other respects, wore a Shakspearian tone. And then the scene shifted, and a roaring water-fall, with Claude-like trees, appeared, and vistas of temples, crowned by the line of sea, and bright flowers or marble lions in front, with damsels in white with real roses in their hair. Or I stood before a mosque-like building with gilded cupola; and a priest with flowing robe and high sorcerer's cap, and streaming hair and beard, mounted the steps; or a Russian vassal, with scarlet caftan, and Vandyke physiognomy, or a lowly Estonian peasant, with sandalled shoon, passed by. Or I was in a French boudoir, respiring nothing but modern luxury, with couches and curtains, and every gewgaw of ingenious idleness. The piece concluding most comfortably with an English bedroom, small, unostentatious, and private — every thing, even to the Windsor soap on the wash-table, recalling those sanctuaries of home. No wonder, then, with French, German, Russian, and English alternately sounding around, that a simple individual was sometimes puzzled to know where the scene really lay.

The château of Fall itself is only appropriated to reception rooms and to the dwelling of the family, and is stored with all the mingled gorgeousness of Asiatic taste and the more polished art

of European civilization. A magnificent collection of silver vessels of Oriental shape and purpose is a conspicuous object, and among the various treasures of art an enamel of Henry the Eighth with his six wives, magnificently set in silver, would be coveted by many an English collector. The accommodations for visitors consist in two houses on either hand set apart for that purpose—this being a custom prevalent both in Estonia and Russia. One of these houses, both of which were completely filled on the present occasion, joins on to the Russian church —a private edifice for the family, consecrated to St. Elizabeth, in honour of the Countess, being dedicated on her name's day. Here every Sunday, and on an occasional fête day, a pope, with deacons, choristers, and all their paraphernalia, are fetched from Reval, and generally begin their duties with a short mass on the Saturday eve. One of these I attended. The prohibition against sitting makes all Greek services very exhausting, and many a sincere believer in the *Vera*, as they particularly denominate their faith, shifted wearily from one foot to the other between the many and fatiguing obeisances which their liturgy requires. All the family stood on a carpet before the screen which conceals the Holy of Holies, and behind them the household servants came and went, each addressing himself to a particular picture; and, since the number is their object, performing their genuflexions in double quick time. Amongst them I recognised my handmaiden hard at work, crossing and bowing; while, overlooking the difference of creed in their love of devotion, a few mild Estonian countenances peeped from the background. But "*Je reviens à mes premiers amours*" —beside me stood a figure, which once seen, my eye wandered to no other child of clay or graven image around. It was Annette—more lovely than ever —her faultless face emerging from a bower of golden curls—her velvet and furs wrapped around her, betraying rather than concealing her exquisite symmetry; now folding her slender form down, like a fair flower surcharged with dew, till her waxen forehead touched the floor, now slowly rearing herself to her full height, and gaining new grace from the attitude of devotion. Oh! Annette, such an apparition as thou would, I fear, have disturbed my meditations in any place of worship! Whoever wins this bright being will own the fairest person, the sweetest voice, the blithest step, and most cheerful mind that ever blessed mortal; and yet "a creature not too fair, or good, for human nature's daily food." Happiness is her atmosphere—the element in which she exists—anxiety seems as little intended for that gay temperament, as sentiment for that sunny face; and I doubt whether either would improve with the addition.

Never was poor mortal so taxed with an "*embarras de richesses pittoresques*" as myself. In-door beauties and out-door beauties assailed me at once, and no sooner had I fixed the one than my eyes played truant to the other. Before the sketch of some luxuriant landscape was half completed, I found myself sighing with longing glances at the group of fair recumbents who had cast themselves around me; with rich flowing and rustling garbs, like a picture of Watteau, and minds, I fear me, no less in the spirit of his times. One lovely evening I shall never forget. I sat on one of the hanging spider-web bridges which a breeze could swing, and which a child's foot agitated too much for my pencil; all supernumerary gazers were therefore banished, and only Count C. remained, half lying, half sitting, on the one hand, and Princess V. on the other—he with all the confidence of a man long taught in the world, she with the double timidity of one who married from the school-room: so much so that had the whole varied little community been sifted through, two greater antipodes in character, both to be worthy and both to be wise, could hardly have been selected. For some time the conversation was not such as to turn my attention from the various angles of the château—the precise number of arched windows, and the alternate

stripes of sunshine and shade on wood and bank which were gradually being transmitted to my paper: when at length the discourse fell on coquetry; and to say the least, the woman must be deeply engrossed in the act itself who does not lend an ear to its discussion. I found matters running high. The Count, who, with his practised and polished tongue, and native wit, prides himself on sustaining a bad cause better than most a good one, was in full strain of eloquence extolling the praises of coquetry, and lording it unmercifully over the little vestal-faced and vestal-minded *Altesse*, whose straightforward arguments were twisted to his advantage as soon as uttered. In vain did she search her memory and all the fair ranks of her native capital for some instance of female attractiveness without this alloy, and in truth Petersburg, as I have since known it, was not the most promising covert for such a chase; till at length, in despair of a better, she exclaimed, "*Par exemple, moi, je ne suis pas coquette!*" "*Vous, Princesse! non, vous êtes charmante,*" said the courtier; "*mais vous êtes trop froide pour être coquette.*" "*Pardonnez,*" rejoined the Princess, roused from her natural languor, and with a look which belied either his or her own assertion, "*la vraie coquette est la plus froide créature au monde.*" The Count was fairly beaten, and laid his arms laughing down, but capitulated on second thoughts with the stipulation that only "*une méchante coquetterie*" was reprehensible in either sex. In trifles such as this did these summer days of relaxation pass over; but trifles are the straws thrown on the current of human character, and fine lines are as sure to read by as coarse.

One night (for now the period was turned which led us slowly and relentlessly to winter's darkness) we were suddenly called out to witness the wild work of salmon fishing. It was a cloudy, moonless night; and issuing on the terrace, the dark valley before us looked for a moment like the starry firmament reversed on earth—every bridge, every path, every conspicuous object was studded with minute lamps, spangling the landscape without illuminating it. The summons, which was to the furthest bridge, just where the river stealthily seeks the sea, full two wersts off, called some from the piano, others from the card-table, and all unexpectedly. All was now confusion. Mantillas and kasavoikas were snatched from the colossal marble vase, where each flung her wrapper on entering the house, and the old ladies tied snug bonnets close under their chins to keep out the night air, and young ladies disposed light handkerchiefs or velvet hoods round their blooming faces, with not nearly so much caution, but incomparably more effect. In their hurry all the garden hats were missing. Now began a most disorderly march through the orange-scented and lamp-fringed paths; light enough to guide by, and yet dark enough to mistake by; and many a shoulder was tapped and hand touched by those who thought they saw a wife or sister in their muffled neighbour—for the mistake could not be voluntary!—while some very respectable bodies plodded on as if the scene had been the high road, and the time high noon-day, and here a straggler ran forward to startle the passers from behind some dark tree, and there a couple lagged behind, and seemed bent on anything but the right of precedence. Now, at a momentary pause of the buzz of whispering laughter, a bold voice loudly exclaimed, "*Point de coquetterie, Princesse,*" who, nestled close beneath her husband's cloak, was too confused at the novel charge to retort with better reason on her dauntless antagonist.

Then at a dark angle, where two paths fell together, a group of pretty lady's maids, bent on the same errand, mingled with our ranks before we had recognised the interlopers, or they their error; but "Honi soit qui mal y pense"—their native courtesy articulated itself in a few melodious Russian phrases, as they meekly drew back, and all was good humour. But I must except the unfortunate *richard*, who found the walk too much, or the excitement too little, for his habits, and returned. "*Monsieur s'ennuie partout*" was the

low remark of a literary gentleman in his suite, and a sadder moral on inordinate wealth cannot be uttered. I'll be bound Ignatuschka is happier.

The scene brightened as we approached the river—the temples were illuminated—every tree wore a torch, and upon the river plied several boats with blazing firebrands for masts, while uncouth figures with brandished harpoons stood leaning intent over the fire-lit streaks and ripples of the otherwise black stream. These Neptunes were only meek Estonians, lighted and shaded into an aspect of ferocity, with their wild locks blown about with the wind, like the flames of the beacon above them, and throwing, as they passed to and fro in the boat, their huge shadows on the neighbouring banks, like shapeless phantoms hovering over the scene. We stood, a motley group, on a little wooden bridge which reaches zigzag from one huge rock to another over the stream. Nine fish were soon caught, and held aloft on their spikes; but nobody cared for the cruel sport, though none regretted the pleasant expedition. Returning home, the little lamps began to sink in their sockets and wish us good night; and some cynic — not Count C.—exclaimed "*Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle,*" but nobody echoed him.

That same night a heavy thunder-storm cleared the air, and extinguished every lingering lamp; and the next morning the cascade presented itself before us in swollen magnificence and weightier peals—huge stones that the day before had emerged bare from the stream were now covered, and the zigzag bridge swept over by the torrent. But the air was cool and delicious, and the waters looked still more so; and—tell it not in Estonia—the pretty Sophie, forgetting her demureness, with another who looked no less wild than she really was, stripped off shoe and stocking, and were already half way upon the frail bridge, the water beating high against their white ankles, when a large party of us emerged in full view. Sophie shook her tiny fist at us as the rocks echoed to our applauses, but speed was impossible to the frightened girls. Nor was the passage without danger; their footing was slippery, and the weight of water as much as they could resist, and, slowly labouring forward, we saw them set foot on dry land with great satisfaction. Gossamer pocket handkerchiefs were here apparently soon wetted through, and a peasant girl, barefooted like themselves, knelt down, and, with her petticoat of many colours, gently wiped off from those tender feet the sand and pebbles which her own did not feel; and then crossed the same bridge herself, with the addition of a heavy basket on her head, without exciting any one's interest.

And now let me revert more particularly to one of the fairest ornaments both in mind and person which our party possesses, whose never-clouded name is such favourite property with the public as to justify me in naming it—I mean the Countess Rossi. The advantages which her peculiar experience and knowledge of society have afforded her, added to the happiest *naturel* that ever fell to human portion, render her exquisite voice and talent, both still in undiminished perfection, by no means her chief attraction in society. Madame Rossi could afford to lose her voice to-morrow, and would be equally sought. True to her nation, she has combined all the *Liebenswürdigkeit* of a German with the witchery of every other land. Madame Rossi's biography is one of great interest and instruction, and it is to be hoped will one day appear before the public. It is not generally known that she was ennobled by the King of Prussia, under the title of Mademoiselle de Launstein; and, since absolute will, it seems, can bestow the past as well as present and future, with seven *Ahnherrn*, or forefathers—" or eight," said the Countess, laughing, " but I can't quite remember;" and though never disowning the popular name of Sonntag, yet, in respect for the donor, her visiting cards when she appears in Prussia are always printed *née de Launstein.* We were greatly privileged in the enjoyment of her rich and flexible notes in our private circle, and under her auspices an

amateur concert was now proposed for the benefit of the poor in Reval. In this undertaking Countess Rossi and Prince V., of whom, if I have not spoken before, it is because I value him too highly to mention him trivially—were the representatives of treble and base, beneath whose banners a number of amateurs, with and without voices, soon ranged themselves. Some offered for music's sake, and others for fashion's sake; and parts were eagerly demanded by the *élite* among the bathing guests at Reval, as well as by a few practised singers belonging to a musical club among the *unadeliche*, or not noble, who unfortunately are the only class in Estonia who keep up any interest in such pursuits. These formed an excellent *fond* to keep wavering voices aright, for most of the fashionables thought chorus-singing would come by inspiration, and, when we all removed to Reval for the final rehearsals, were as innocent of their right parts as if they had never seen them. Madame Rossi, however, was the conscience as well as the organ of all the careless trebles:—no half-finished, slurred-over rehearsals were permitted. She stepped with courtesy and sweet temper from one tuneless group to another, bearing the right note aloft till all clung securely to it, and was never weary of helping and hearing. The opening chorus was "*die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes*," or the well-known "Heavens are telling," from the Creation;—Henzelt, the celebrated pianist, whom accident had brought to Reval, a man of exquisite finger and most interesting exterior, conducting the whole from the piano.

But these ladies were worse to teach than charity-girls. Some of them deemed the rehearsals utterly superfluous, others left their parts behind them, and others were so inveterately in good humour that it was difficult to scold them for being as much out of tune. Of one pretty creature with more animation in her face than music in her soul, whose voice in the Creation wandered to forbidden paths, a Russian humorist observed, "*Elle chante des choses qui n'ont jamais existé, même dans la Création!*"

Altogether these rehearsals were merry meetings, and when our own bawling was over Madame Rossi went through her songs as scrupulously as the rest. I shall never forget the impression she excited one evening. We were all united in the great ball-room at the Governor's castle in Reval, which was partially illuminated for the occasion, and, having wound up our last noisy "*Firmament*," we all retreated to distant parts of the salle, leaving the Countess to rehearse the celebrated Scena from the Freischütz with the instrumental parts. She was seated in the midst, and completely hidden by the figures and desks around her. And now arose a strain of melody and expression which thrills every nerve to recall;—the interest and pathos creeping gradually on through every division of this most noble and passionate of songs,—the gloomy light,—the invisible songstress,—all combining to increase the effect, till the feeling became almost too intense to bear. And then the horn in the distance, and the husky voice of suppressed agony whilst doubt possessed her soul, chilled the blood in our veins, and her final burst, "*Er ist's, Er ist's*," was one of agony to her audience. Tears, real tears, ran down cheeks both fair and rough, who knew not and cared not that they were there; and not until the excitement had subsided did I feel that my wrist had been clenched in so convulsive a grasp by my neighbour as to retain marks long after the siren had ceased. I have heard Schröder and Malibran, both grand and true in this composition, but neither searched the depths of its passionate tones, and with it the hearts of the audience, so completely as the matchless Madame Rossi.

On the evening preceding the concert a public rehearsal was held at half price, which gave the finishing stroke to the choruses; and, as far as the principals were concerned, was just as attractive as the concert itself. Suffice it to say that this latter went off with great éclat, and anybody who may have occasion to examine the Petersburg Gazettes of the time will find a florid account of its success, together with

the names of all the noble individuals concerned therein. It realised 4500 roubles, which, from the circumstance of the crown's having *forgotten* to pay its yearly donation of 1000 roubles to the chief charitable institution, and there being a little ill-timed delicacy in high quarters as to the policy of a reminder, was doubly welcome.

The Countess was greatly exhausted, and languor stole on all the party as we returned to Fall, whose woods and streams looked fresher than ever. The next day I quitted this paradise of mingled sweets and returned with unaltered zest to my quiet home, and with increased enjoyment to that being whose smile of beauty and whose voice of love had that superiority over those I had quitted, that my heart could never find words to describe either the one or the other.

LETTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

Autumn scenes—Separation from Estonia.

The beauties of autumn, and the moral of its yellow leaves, are seen and felt in all countries. Nowhere, however, I am inclined to think, can the former be so resplendent, or the latter so touching, as in the land where I am still a sojourner. In our temperate isle autumn may be contemplated as the glorious passing away of the well-matured —the radiant death-bed of the ripe in years—while here the brilliant colours on earth and sky are like the hectic cheek and kindling eye of some beautiful being whose too hasty development has been but the presage of a premature decay. Thus it is that the vast plains and woods of Estonia are now displaying the most gorgeous colours of their palette, ere the white brush of winter sweep their beauties from sight, while the golden and crimson wreaths of the deciduous trees, peeping from amongst the forests of sober pines, may be compared to gay lichens sprinkling their hues over a cold grey rock, or to a transient smile passing over the habitual brow of care.

But all too hasty is the progress of this splendid funeral march—even now its pomp is hidden by gloomy slanting rains, its last tones lost in the howl of angry blasts, which, as if impatient to assume their empire, are rudely stripping off and trampling down every vestige of summer's short-lived festival, while Nature, shorn of her wealth, holds out here and there a streamer of bright colours, like a bankrupt still eager to flaunt in the finery of better days.

This season, as the dismal forerunner of that time which is to sever me from Estonia and all its real and acquired bonds of attachment, is doubly autumn to me. Whatever you do or see, says Dr. Johnson, consciously for the last time, is ever accompanied by a feeling of regret. How just then the sorrow of one who has found a second home in the land she now must quit! Cowards die a thousand deaths ere the dreaded stroke arrive, and affection, which can nerve itself for every trial save that of separation, suffers a thousand partings ere the final wrench ensue. But where is the remedy? The heart that deepest feels will also keenest anticipate. In occasions of joy, this is too often the better part;—would it were the worst with those of sorrow!

It is easy abstractedly to reason upon and even to make light of the privileges of mere local vicinity—of mere temporary union—as compared with the ubiquity of affection's thoughts, and the perpetuity of the heart's fidelity. It is easy to say that all earthly light must have its shadow—that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong —that few abide with those with whom they for ever would stay:—this is all very easy, too easy, to say. But what do such arguments avail when you awake each morning with an undefined sense of impending evil—when your days are spent as if the sword of Damocles hung suspended over your head, and when each separation for night tells you that another day has passed away of the few still left! Where is all your firmness when you hear the music of a light footstep, or feel the touch of the gentle hand which rouses you at once from your reveries of forced philosophy, and dissipates all its resolutions! Or, worst of all, when at some sign of approaching separation—at some allusion to a future to be spent apart—you see an eye, heavy laden, turn hastily away, as if to punish itself for a weakness which threatens to overset your strength! No—such feelings

as these admit of no reasoning—the conflict is worse than the surrender. The affections in general may most require guidance, but there are seasons when they are the best law to themselves, when the wisdom of the world is utter foolishness with them.

How countless are the numbers and various the tongues of those who have written and sung of that love, evanescent when favoured, wretched when opposed, which binds man and woman! But who has told of the depths of that feeling which leads neither to selfishness nor to shame, which is neither maintained by art nor endangered by change—who has traced the course of that sweet fountain of poetry which flows steadiest on through banks of the deadliest prose—the affection which unites two sisters!—This is the only earthly love which has cast out fear—which takes nought amiss—loses no moments in misunderstanding—which knoweth no jealousy save the jealousy of the loved one's sufferings—which would sacrifice even her love rather than she should need yours—which has all the tenderness, the delicacy, the sensitiveness of the other passion—all its beauty and none of its barbarity; which is always in the honeymoon of love's kindness, without the vulgarity of love's satiety; which compensates where it cannot defend, sympathises where it cannot help— * * *

But let this subject pass: it is one too sacred for exhibition, too delicate for analysis;—those who know its blessings will also understand its penalties.

Nor is this all: the traveller who ventures to bide that time when the force of old habits and associations can no longer impede the entrance of new preferences must prepare for many regrets; for, ere we suspect the deed, the heart is found to have thrown out numberless slender fibres into the new soil around, all painful to divide. When I first entered Estonia, it was with the laudable resolve, easier made than kept, of investing no feeling, of forming no friendship in the foreign world here opened to me, but of rigidly restricting all present happiness and future regret to that one being who I knew would furnish both in overflowing measure. But what knows the heart about systems of policy! Had the social atmosphere been rude, or the social elements repelling, it would have cost the traveller no effort to wrap her mantle of reserve close about her; but when the sun of kindness shone ceaseless forth,—when every avenue to susceptibility was besieged with gentle courtesies and gratuitous hospitalities—what remained but to throw it off and surrender a willing prisoner?

Were I to enumerate all those who not only met but sought that stranger who came coldly determined not to love, but was not proof to being loved, with a kindness as much above her deserts as beyond her powers of requital, it would fill a letter more interesting to her than any that has gone before. Suffice it to say, that those who were rich in this world's gifts have treated the traveller with a simple and sincere heartiness, without which all the luxury of their princely residences would have attracted no feeling save that of curiosity; while those who were out of suits with Fortune have welcomed her to humble homes, where the utmost refinement of mind and polish of acquirement have furnished a charm money could not have bought.

It is with a heavy heart that I prepare to bid farewell to Estonia. Its past history is now familiar to those who may scan these letters, and its future destinies must be interesting speculation to those who would desire to see so many fine elements improved to their utmost. The tendencies of this province are all markedly German. To compel the substitution of Russian would be to compel it to retrograde. It cannot rebel. All violation, therefore, of those terms by which Russia originally made the acquisition of these provinces — all interruption of that independence of administration and liberty of action which were the conditions of their surrender, merely because they are unable to enforce them —would be as unfair as unwise.

From the stability of this vast em-

pire the Baltic provinces derive protection and peace; but in their turn they hold out a model of simplicity and integrity in the administration of justice, which, in Russia, cannot be termed obsolete, but rather unknown. At the same time there is ample space for the exercise of obedience and the pride of independence;—ample means for giving Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, without defrauding or selling their own nationality.

Fairly considered, the position of the Estonian noble is one of the happiest that man can desire. He enjoys the privileges of rank and importance without its fatigues—the blessings of independence without its responsibilities. His sphere of usefulness is wide—his means of existence easy. It rests only with himself to unite the refinements of education with the healthiness of a country gentleman's life. He has it infinitely more in his power to promote the welfare of his little, fertile, favoured province, than the Russian government has at present inclination to thwart it.

It is impossible to guarantee the maintenance of a nation's or of a province's prosperity where there is no constitutional pledge for safety; but as things now stand, there is less to be feared in Estonia from the caprices of the crown than from the influence of individuals, who do not scruple to wrong their countrymen in the futile attempt to propitiate power.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

Russia considered as a study—New Year's Eve—Peculiar family demonstrations—Bridge of Kisses—Routine of a Petersburg life—Oriental regiments, and Oriental physioguomy—Fête at the Winter Palace—Scene from the gallery of the Salle Blanche—Court costume—Display of diamonds—Masked ball at the theatre—The Emperor—The Heritier—The Grand Duke Michael—Masked ball at the Salle de Noblesse—Uses and abuses of masked balls in Russia.

Petersburg, January.

THIS change of place has brought with it such a corresponding change of outward life, that to continue these letters in the same unbroken form would be impracticable. Although living in the centre of Russian society, and exposed at every pore to its influences, yet my impressions of those characteristics which distinguish it from other countries can be gleaned only in irregular succession, and in such only rendered again. Of all the states in the world, Russia is at this time most particularly that which requires the application of principles grounded equally on the studious knowledge of the past and a lucid judgment of the future to render that wholeness and impartiality of opinion which may be comprehensible to others and just to her. Those who would fairly judge Russia must first strip themselves of those habits of thought which, whatever their seeming, are only coincident with the age to which they have the accident to belong, and go back to those raw but stable elements which are the sole groundwork for a nation's prosperity, and which, in the present turmoil of hasty and changing opinions, have little chance of being comprehended and appreciated save by some old-fashioned representative of an old-fashioned country, who considers the *a*, *b*, *c* of loyalty and obedience the sole basis of any safe knowledge and of any solid civilization.

The two species of writers who have hitherto made Russia the subject of their pens are either the mere tourist, who sees and judges as the passing traveller—or those whom public office or private connection has thrown into the highest circles of the capital, and are thus placed where they may, it is true, analyse the froth, but are far from reaching the substance of the nation. No one has hitherto attempted the *philosophy* of this country, than which no subject to reflecting and generalising minds can be more interesting; while those dissertations on its political aspect which have appeared in our periodicals are so coloured with obvious partiality, or with obvious invective, as rather to deter the reader from forming any distinct opinion than to give him any premises whereon to rest.

Russia has only two ranks — the highest and the lowest; consequently it exhibits all those rudenesses of social life which must be attendant on these two extreme positions of power and dependence. It is vain therefore to look for those qualities which equally restrain the one and protect the other, and which alone take root in that half-way class called forth in the progress of nations equally for the interest of both. For in this light it is impossible to view the scanty and broken-linked portion of Russian society which a sanguine and too hasty policy has forced, not nourished, into existence, and which at present rather acts as the depression and not the foundation of that most important body denominated the middle ranks of a nation. To study the real destinies of Russia the philosopher of mankind must descend to a class still in bondage, and not yet ripe for free-

dom, but where the elements of political stability and commercial energy are already glaringly apparent.

As I may include myself among the second class of Russian travellers above mentioned, it is needless to state that it is as little in my power as in my inclination to enter upon subjects requiring equally difference of position and superiority of capacity, or rather no further than as they may be indirectly connected with the habits of the highest circles; if indeed so fragile a key may in any way be applied to the ponderous internal machinery of a state like Russia.

I entered Petersburg at a season particularly enlivened by festivities—viz., at the end of December (old style); and my first introduction into domestic scenes may be said to have commenced with the eve of New-year's Day. On this occasion every member near and remote of a large family connection, to the number of at least forty, assembled in the magnificent apartments of Count ——'s hotel. The evening passed away most cheerfully, and towards midnight we all paired off to supper. Here every delicacy was spread, and champagne poured out freely; but as the hour which dismissed the old and installed the new year resounded from the great clock on the staircase, every one rose, glass in hand; and now commenced a scene in which old and young—old men and children, young men and maidens—all took a share, and which, however matter-of-fact to relate, was highly amusing to witness. In plain language, then, everybody present kissed everybody present—one unrelated head, I beg to observe, excepted. This ceremony occupied some time, since, according to vulgar calculation, not less than sixteen hundred kisses were on this occasion exchanged. Not hasty, piano, shamefaced commissions; but fearless, powerful, resounding salutations which left no question of the fact —more noisy, however, than mischievous, more loud than deep,—in many cases the cheeks of the parties being simultaneously presented, and the kiss lost on the desert air. It was very amusing to see the crowd as they circulated together—the silence only broken by the jingling of glasses and the very audible nature of their occupation. After which evaporation of family affection the whole party resumed their seats and continued their meal.

This is the national salute—in universal vogue from remote antiquity—rather a greeting than a caress—derived equally from religious feeling and from Oriental custom. Fathers and sons kiss — old generals with rusty moustachios kiss — whole regiments kiss. The Emperor kisses his officers. On a reviewing day there are almost as many kisses as shots exchanged. If a Lilliputian corps de cadets have earned the Imperial approval, the Imperial salute is bestowed upon the head boy, who passes it on with a hearty report to his neighbour, he in his turn to the next, and so on, till it has been diluted through the whole juvenile body. If the Emperor reprimand an officer unjustly, the sign of restoration to favour as well as the best atonement is—a kiss. One of the bridges in Petersburg is to this day called the *Potzalui Most*, or Bridge of Kisses [not of Sighs], in commemoration of Peter the Great, who, having in a fit of passion unjustly degraded an officer in face of his whole regiment, kissed the poor man in the same open way upon the next public occasion on this very bridge.

On a holiday, or *jour de fête*, the young and delicate mistress of a house will not only kiss all her maid-servants, but all her men-servants too; and, as I have mentioned before, if the gentleman venture not above her hand, she will stoop and kiss his cheek. As for the Russian father of a family, his affection knows no bounds: if he leave his *cabinet d'affaires* ten times in the course of the morning and enter his lady's saloon above, he kisses all his family when he enters, and again when he leaves the room: sometimes indeed so mechanically, that, forgetting whether he has done it or not, he goes a second round to make all sure. To judge also from the number of salutes, the matrimonial bond in these high

circles must be one of uninterrupted felicity—a gentleman scarcely enters or leaves the room without kissing his wife either on forehead, cheek, or hand. Remarking upon this to a lofty-looking creature who received these connubial demonstrations with rather a suspicious sang-froid, she replied, "*Oh! ça ne veut rien dire—pour moi, je voudrais tout autant être battue qu'embrassée —par habitude!*"

The Russians have from long practice acquired such a facility in this respect, that a quick succession of salutes is nearly equal in power of intonation to the clapping of hands. It must be very fatiguing! But now—

"As a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing on a nature brings,"

it may be as well to quit this subject.

The daily routine of a Russian family of this rank is easily complied with. Breakfast no visitor is expected to join; the family usually assembling for this meal in too deep a *négligé* for a stranger to witness. By noon the lady of the house is seated at her writing-table or embroidery-frame. Lunch is not served, but each orders a hot cutlet as he may feel inclined. Then visitors throng in, or the carriage and four awaits you, for here wheels are deemed the most becoming conveyance for age and dignity, although youth and beauty are seen gliding through the noiseless streets in open sledges. This mixture of vehicles, however, cuts up the snow, which here, from the severity of the frost and the restless traffic, lies in the principal street in ridges of fine crystals—like sand both in colour and quality—and is very heavy for the horses. Dinner is generally at four—at least, this is the Imperial hour; and as the Imperial movements are all rapid, and no one is expected to stay after dinner, our host frequently returns from dining with his Majesty in time for his own five o'clock repast, which not unseldom he pronounces the better of the two. After dinner the more intimate friends of the family drop uninvited in, and make up the whist-table; and then some depart for the theatre, or later for balls, and so the days go round.

But to return. It was New-year's Day, and, having taken my solitary breakfast, I was seated at my occupations, when a jingle of spurs was heard at my door, and Prince B—— entered the room to apprise me that detachments from the Circassian, Kirghise, and other Oriental regiments, *pour féliciter* the Count, were below in full uniform. Snatching therefore a mantilla from the hands of Sascha, whose Reval ideas were rather disturbed by the intrusion of a pair of epaulettes in my sanctuary, I hastily followed to the ante-room of the Count's cabinet, and stood between a file of soldiers drawn up in opposite lines. They were armed to the teeth—swords, pistols, cutlasses, bows, and arrows; their powder-charges ranged six on each breast; their uniform red, with a casque of chain-mail fitting close round the face and descending on the shoulders, with numerous other appendages for which my European ideas discovered neither use nor name; terminating with red Turkish slippers pointed upwards—altogether a most striking and martial dress.

But if their accoutrements were fierce, their looks corresponded. Not a blue nor a grey eye—not a soft, nor a calm, nor a sleepy look was to be discerned, but a row of burning black lenses flashed on the stranger who had ventured within the range of their focus. We erroneously impute the beauty of languor to the Circassian physiognomy. Here there was no smothered fire, no veiled beams, —every face blazed with a restless glow. The features were regular—the complexions dark; but this red-hot expression defaced all beauty. They were all small men—the officers taller than the privates, but with the same inflammable character of physiognomy. These latter had acquired the French language, and were courteous and graceful in manner.

By noon of the same day I was summoned to accompany my kind hostess and her beautiful daughter, who, as Dame and Demoiselle d'honneur attended at the celebration of the New-year's fête at the Winter Palace. There

was no military *spectacle*, the weather being too severe; for reviews are not willingly undertaken if the thermometer be below 10°. The *Grande Place* before the Imperial entrance was thronged with carriages and sledges of every description, and guarded by troops of soldiers. We entered this superb palace, so late a mere burnt-out crust, and, leaving my two gorgeously-attired companions to pursue their way to the Imperial presence, I was conducted by Prince V., in his glittering chamberlain's dress, upstairs and through corridors, all smelling of recent building and fresh paint, and placed by him in an advantageous position in the gallery above the Salle Blanche — the most magnificent apartment in this most magnificent of palaces, and so called from its decorations being all in pure white relieved only with gilding. Eighty feet below me, in miniature size, was a splendid pageant. Ranged along the walls stood a triple row of motionless soldiery; on one side, in graceful contrast with their stiff lines, was congregated a fair bevy of female figures, with sweeping trains and gleaming jewels; while slim figures of court chamberlains, with breast and back laden with the richest gold embroidery, with white pantaloons and silk stockings, hurried across the scene — or stopped to pay homage to the ladies — or loitered to converse with the groups of officers in every variety of uniform, with stars, orders, and cordons glittering about them, who sauntered in the centre. Conspicuous among these latter was the person of the Grand Duke Michael, brother to the Emperor—a magnificent figure, with immense length of limb and a peculiar curve of outline which renders him recognisable at any distance, among hundreds in the same uniform, and who was seen pacing slowly backwards and forwards on the marble-like parquête, and bending fierce looks on the soldiery.

Nor was the scene above without its attractions and peculiarities, for many distinguished-looking individuals were leaning over the same railings with myself — among them an Ingrelian princess, a middle-aged woman of uncommon beauty, with commanding features and long languishing eyes, and a peculiar high head-dress, flowing veil, and a profusion of jewels. And at the upper end, apart from all, sat in a solitary chair the Grand Duchess Olga, second daughter of the Emperor, a most beautiful girl of sixteen, just restored from a dangerous fever, the traces of which were visible in the exquisite delicacy of her complexion, and in the light girl-like cap worn to hide the absence of those tresses which had been sacrificed to her illness. She was attended by her preceptress, Madame Baranoff.

But now the drums beat, the trumpets sounded, and every eye turned below. A cortège was seen advancing through the open entrance, and the Commandant Sakachefsky, rearing his full length and corpulent person, put himself with drawn sword at their head. A line of military passed; then a body of chamberlains,—when the band broke into the soul-stirring national hymn "*Boje Zara chrani*"—the troops presented arms, and a noble figure was seen advancing.

This was the Emperor—the plainest dressed, but the most magnificent figure present, wanting no outward token to declare the majesty of his presence. He passed slowly on, accommodating his manly movements to the short, feeble steps of the Empress, who, arrayed in a blaze of jewels, dragged a heavy train of orange-coloured velvet after her, and seemed hardly able to support her own weight. To the Imperial pair succeeded the *Naslednik*, or *Heritier*, the slender prototype of his father's grand proportions,— with the Grand Duke Michael, and the youngest son of the Imperial house. Portly ladies and graceful maids of honour, with grey-haired generals, were seen in glistening train behind. But the eye followed that commanding figure and lofty brow, towering above every other, till it vanished beneath the portals leading to the chapel. And now ensued all the disorderly rear of a procession—tardy maids of honour and flirting officers, who came helter-skelter along, talking and laughing with a free-

dom proportioned to their distance from the Imperial pair—till the doors closed on them also, and the immovable military were left to thank the gods that the Grand Duke's eyes were otherwise employed.

And now my kind chamberlain again appeared; and, in order to avoid an apartment where the Grand Duchesses were stationed, we made the circuit of the palace, up stairs and down stairs—a walk which occupied more than ten minutes—and returned to within a short distance of my former position, to a window overlooking the chapel. Here stood the whole cortège thickly compressed together—one blaze of diamonds, stars, and epaulettes; while in advance of the rest was the Imperial family; the Empress, on account of her ill health, alone seated; the Emperor on her right, motionless as a statue; the Naslednik on her left, shifting from one long limb to the other—all crossing themselves and bowing at intervals. The service lasted two hours, varied only by the delicious responses of the court choristers. It was performed by the metropolitan and two other dignitaries of high rank, in high wizard caps, and gorgeous mystic robes, who looked like the priests of Isis, or any other theatrical representation of sacerdotal dignity. After this the procession returned as it came.

The Empress detained the ladies for chocolate and refreshments; and the Countess and her daughter returned home perfectly exhausted with the duties of the day.

The court costume is both magnificent and becoming. It has been introduced in the present reign, and consists of a white satin dress fastened up the front with gold buttons, and richly embroidered in gold with a graceful Grecian pattern. Over this is a velvet robe, green for the Dames d'honneur, crimson for the Demoiselles, with long hanging sleeves, and descending in an ample train worked all round with a gorgeous scroll of wheat-ears in gold. The head-dress agrees in shape with the common national costume—being what is termed a *pavoinik*, a fan-shaped machine—orange velvet for the Dames d'honneur, and any dark colour they please for the Demoiselles,—closed at the back of the head for the former, and open for the latter, with a long blond veil attached, which flows halfway down the dress. This *pavoinik* is laden with as many diamonds as it can carry; and as the Empress's recollections of *toilette* are excessively tenacious, care is taken to appear every time in a new device, and to vary the form and position of the diamonds, which, to compare things vile with things precious, all unhook for this purpose like the cut crystals of a chandelier. The neck and arms are also adorned with corresponding brilliancy.

The display of diamonds here is immense. Every woman of rank has a glass case, or a succession of glass cases, like those on a jeweller's counter, where her jewels are spread out on purple velvet, under lock and key, in her own bedroom: and as it is here that she often receives her morning guests, for nothing is seen of sleeping or dressing apparatus save the superb mirrors and a gorgeous screen, her wealth of brilliants and other jewels is displayed to advantage. Here also, in the jewel-case of the high-born matron, lies the miniature of the Empress, ornamented with brilliants, the insignia of the Dame d'honneur. Likewise, with those who are so honoured, the Order of St. Catherine, no less resplendent with diamonds; while in the young ladies' display, side by side with necklaces and bracelets, may generally be found the *chiffre*, or initial of the Empress, an A. in diamonds, which denotes the Demoiselle d'honneur. The number of these latter is at this time about a hundred and fifty.

On the 6th of January, O.S., the fête of the three kings, this court ceremony was renewed, with the addition of a procession of priests. After which the Emperor proceeded to bless the waters of the Neva, which are supposed to be gifted with supernatural virtues; on which occasion himself and everybody present is bareheaded. The severity of the weather and the amount of the crowd forbade any attempt to witness this national ceremony.

I was now becoming impatient for a nearer view of that awful personage whom all united in describing as "*le plus bel homme qu'on puisse s'imaginer*," and who, whether seen from the diminishing heights of the Salle Blanche,—or dashing along, his white feathers streaming, and muffled in his military cloak in his solitary sledge with one horse,—or striding with powerful steps, utterly unattended, in the dusk of the early evening, the whole length of the Nevski, wore a halo of majesty it was impossible to overlook. An opportunity for a closer view soon presented itself.

It was Sunday; and, after attending morning service at the English Church —the more impressive from long privation of its privileges,—I was driving, twelve hours later, viz. at midnight, with Princess B. and Countess L., to a very different resort—namely, to the great theatre, where, after the dramatic performances, masquerades are held once or twice a-week before Lent. These are frequented by a mixed public, the Salle de Noblesse being reserved for the disguise of the individuals *de la plus haute volée*: these latter therefore on occasions like this take a box on a level with the floor of the theatre, which extends on these nights over the whole of the parterre, and thus participate without actually mixing in the scene.

The coup d'œil on entering the box was very striking. A multitude of several hundreds was gathered together in the theatre's vast oblong; the women alone masked, and almost without exception in black dress and domino; the men, and those chiefly military, with covered heads and no token of the occasion save in a black scarf, as sign of domino, upon their left arm — their white plumes and gay uniforms contrasting vividly with the black-faced and draped figures around them; all circulating stealthily to and fro; no music, no dancing, no object apparent but gesticulation, whisper, mystery, and intrigue.

Here a knot of witch-like figures, as if intent on mischief, stood muttering in low tones together. There a slight mask tripped up to a stately grave general, tapped his shoulder, and, passing her arm into his, bore him off with significant nods. In front of us a couple of these sibyls, with bright eyes gleaming through their gloomy masks, attacked a young officer in high, squeaking, counterfeit tones, laughing and jeering, while the good man looked bewildered from the one to the other, and seemed to say, "How happy could I be with either!" And farther, apart from the throng, sat on a low step a solitary mask, who shook her head solemnly at all who approached, as if awaiting some expected prey;—while, half-timid, half-coquette, a light figure whispered some words in a gentleman's ear, and then, retreating before his eager pursuit, plunged into the crowd, and was lost to his recognition among the hundreds of similar disguises.

The Heritier, the Grand Duke Michael, the Duke de Leuchtenberg, were all seen passing in turn—each led about by a whispering mask—"*Mais où est donc l'Empereur?*" "*Il n'y est pas encore*," was the answer; but scarce was this uttered when a towering plume moved, the crowd fell back, and enframed in a vacant space stood a figure to which there is no second in Russia, if in the world itself;—a figure of the grandest beauty, expression, dimension, and carriage, uniting all the majesties and graces of all the Heathen gods—the little god of love alone perhaps excepted —on its ample and symmetrical proportions. Had this nobility of person belonged to a common *Mougik* instead of to the Autocrat of all the Russias, the admiration could not have been less, nor scarcely the feeling of moral awe. It was not the monarch who was so magnificent a man, but the man who was so truly imperial. He stood awhile silent and haughty, as if disdaining all the vanity and levity around him, when, perceiving my two distinguished companions, he strode grandly towards our box, and, just lifting his plumes with a lofty bow, stooped and kissed the princess's hand, who in return imprinted a kiss on the Imperial cheek; and then leaning against the pillar remained in conversation.

The person of the Emperor is that of a colossal man, in the full prime of life and health; forty-two years of age, about six feet two inches high, and well filled out, without any approach to corpulency—the head magnificently carried, a splendid breadth of shoulder and chest, great length and symmetry of limb, with finely formed hands and feet. His face is strictly Grecian—forehead and nose in one grand line; the eyes finely lined, large, open and blue, with a calmness, a coldness, a freezing dignity, which can equally quell an insurrection, daunt an assassin, or paralyse a petitioner; the mouth regular, teeth fine, chin prominent, with dark moustache and small whisker; but not a sympathy on his face! His mouth sometimes smiled, his eyes never. There was that in his look which no monarch's subject could meet. His eye seeks every one's gaze, but none can confront his.

After a few minutes his curiosity, the unfailing attribute of a crowned head, dictated the words, "*Kto eta?*" —"Who is that?"—and being satisfied —for he remarks every strange face that enters his capital—he continued alternately in Russian and French commenting upon the scene.

"*Personne ne m'intrigue ce soir,*" he said: "*je ne sais pas ce que j'ai fait pour perdre ma réputation, mais on ne veut pas de moi.*" As he stood various masks approached, but, either from excess of embarrassment or from lack of wit, after rousing the lion, found nothing to say. At length a couple approached and stood irresolute, each motioning the other to speak. "*Donnez-moi la main,*" said a low trembling voice. He stretched out his noble hand: "*et voilà l'autre pour vous,*" extending the other to her companion; and on they passed, probably never to forget the mighty hand that had clasped theirs. Meanwhile the Emperor carefully scanned the crowd, and owned himself in search of a mask who had attacked him on his first entrance. "*Quand je l'aurai trouvé, je vous l'amènerai;*" and so saying he left us.

I watched his figure, which, as if surrounded with an invisible barrier, bore a vacant space about it through the thickest of the press. In a short time a little mask stepped boldly up to him, and, reaching upwards to her utmost stretch, hung herself fearlessly upon that arm which wields the destinies of the seventh part of the known world. He threw a look to our box, as if to say "I have found her;" and off they went together. In five minutes they passed again, and his Majesty made some effort to draw her to our box, but the little black sylph resisted, pulling in a contrary direction at his lofty shoulder with all her strength; on which he called out, "*Elle ne veut pas que je m'approche de vous; elle dit que je suis trop mauvaise société.*" Upon the second round, however, he succeeded in bringing his rebellious subject nearer; when, recognising his manœuvre, she plucked her arm away, gave him a smart slap on the wrist, and, saying "*Va t'en, je ne veux plus de toi,*" ran into the crowd. The Emperor, they assured me, was in an unusual good temper this evening.—I think there can be no doubt of it.

The Heritier now also took his station at our pillar. He inherits his father's majestic person and somewhat of the regularity of his face, but with the utter absence of the Emperor's unsympathising grandeur. On the contrary, the son has a face of much sentiment and feeling; the lips full,—the eyelids pensive—more of kindness than of character in his expression.

To him succeeded the Grand Duke Michael, wiping the heat from his forehead. A fine, bravo style of face, with somewhat ferocious moustaches,—a terrestrial likeness of the Emperor—earthly passions written on his high brow, but none of Jove's thunderbolts.

After this the Emperor's arm no longer remained vacant, being occupied by a succession of masks, who by turns amused, flattered, or enlightened the Imperial ear. In like manner were his Highness the Prince Volkonski, Ministre de la Cour—Count Benkendorff, Chef de la Gendarmerie, de la Haute Police, et de la Police Secrète—Count Tchernitcheff, Ministre de la Guerre—and other high state and mili-

tary officers, engaged; their attendance at masked balls being a part of their service.

This was my first introduction to such scenes: the second took place in the Salle de Noblesse, recently erected for public entertainments, and now considered the finest in Europe. The Salle itself is surrounded by a colonnade, twenty feet wide, of white marble pillars in couples supporting a gallery, ascended by a winding staircase at each corner. The vast arena for dancing is several feet lower than this colonnade, and entered thence by six different flights of noble steps. Of the exact dimensions I can give no measurement, save that seventy-five magnificent chandeliers were by no means crowded in position, or overpowering in light. Attached to this grand apartment are other rooms fitted up with every luxury, and forming a circular suite, opening at each end into the colonnade I have described.

Here a repetition of the same half-glittering, half-sable scene was presented, but multiplied in number, for no less than two thousand seven hundred individuals, in and out of masks, were gathered together in the centre space, or circulating round the colonnade, or seated in the gallery aloft, or scattered through the suite of smaller rooms.

How in this wilderness of space and perplexity of crowd, where, under ordinary circumstances, a couple once separated had little chance of meeting again the same evening—how in this dazzling, shifting, confusing turmoil, among hundreds and thousands shrouded to the same form and colour—each solitary mask contrived to rejoin the party with whom she entered, was perhaps more a matter of anxiety to my mind than it was to theirs. The only way for these scattered particles to reunite is to fix upon some trysting-place—beneath the orchestra, or at the fourth pillar on the right hand, or on the sofa nearest the left, where, when tired with a solitary prowl after some object of her search, or weary with parading on the arm of some unknown individual,—who either proves impenetrably dull to her harmless sallies, or jumps to conclusions never intended, or indulges in innuendoes rather too plain of his own,—the weary mask may take refuge with some chance of finding a sister figure, who, led there by the same errand, immediately responds to her cautious watch-word.

The only security on these occasions for your own enjoyment, or at any rate comfort, and for the entertainment which the assumption of this incognito promises to others, is to recognise the full advantages of your disguise--to forget your identity, and remember only your privileges—to bear in mind that when you assumed the mask you threw off all social responsibilities—to observe no ceremony—respect no person—to be flippant, contradictory, pert, and personal without fear of consequences—and in short to say little behind your mask that you would utter without it. As a pretty, witty, good-for-nothing little *intriguante* of the higher circles said to a timid novice on her first début in this disguise, "*Souvenez-vous en, ma chère, on n'a pas besoin d'un masque pour prêcher des sermons.*"

The general plan with the ladies of rank on these occasions is to acquire, by direct or indirect channels, some private information, some trivial anecdote of the every-day life or secret doings of the individual whom they intend, as the term is, to "*intriguer*"—to surprise him with the knowledge of some present he has made, or some letter he has sent, and which he considered unknown to all but the receiver—or to repeat verbatim some sentence which he supposes no one could have overheard; and by making the most of a little information to make him suppose them possessed of much more, and finally to heighten his perplexity by mystifying every avenue to their own identity.

For instance: Count —— is the secret adorer of Madame ——, or fancies himself such. He gives her magnificent presents; and among the rest—the lady having pretty feet—he takes it into his head, with a lover's or a Russian's caprice, to surprise her with a foot-bath of the most delicate porcelain,

which he orders at the celebrated *Magasin Anglais* in St. Petersburg. Well, at the next masked ball, a little brisk mask "*s'empare de son bras*," and, after the first conventional impertinences of the place, she hangs her little black head sentimentally on one side, heaves a sigh, and exclaims, "*Ah! que Madame —— doit être heureuse! Que donnerais-je, moi, pour avoir un gentil petit bain de pied en porcelaine! J'ai aussi de jolis petits pieds, n'est-ce pas?*"—and with that she holds up a fairy foot, dressed in black shoe and stocking, with a coquettish gesture. "*Diable!*" thinks the Count: if she knows all about this foot-bath, of course she is also in the secret about the diamond bracelet, and the embroidered mantilla, and the Pensa shawl, and the letters I have written—"*qui sait!*" and, if the lady understand her *metier*, she probably contrives, by pursuing some right hit, or mystifying some wrong one, to elicit exactly that which he most intended to conceal: when, having spent all her store, or finding him in turn touching upon dangerous ground, she turns off with "*Mille remercimens pour tes informations. Tout le monde m'a dit que tu étais bête—à présent m'en voilà convaincue:*"—and these last words, pronounced in a louder tone, raise a laugh in the crowd around, who in this light, empty place, where sauciness is considered the only cleverness, and personality the best wit, are thankful for the smallest crumbs of amusement that may be thrown to them.

On this account it is that any lady's maid, or milliner's apprentice, or *couturière*, who, admitted with her basket of new dresses into the private boudoir of the highest ladies in the land, sees more behind the scenes than her superiors—is noticed for her pretty looks by *le mari*, or *l'ami*—hears familiarities of dialogue which her presence noways restrains—and, if intent on this object, contrives to glean from the servants any further information she may want;—on this account it is that this class of persons, who frequently speak two or three languages correctly, and are not encumbered with that delicacy and timidity which restrains the really modest or the real gentlewoman, are generally most successful in perplexing the wits and piquing the curiosity of the gentlemen. At the Salle de Noblesse none who are not noble may find access; but in the latitudinarian nobility of Russia, and the transferability of a mask, this law is frequently evaded—and at the theatre these *grisettes* always play a conspicuous part.

The Emperor, when a mask has pleased his fancy, never rests till he has discovered her real name, and sets his secret police upon the scent with as much zest as after a political offender. The mask whom we had observed at the theatre on such familiar terms with him was recognised a few days after to be a little *modiste* from the most fashionable milliner's in Petersburg, whose frequent errands to the Empress had furnished her with a few graphic touches of the Imperial character.

But to return to the ladies of the highest society who make use of this disguise for mere purposes of raillery and good-natured mischief. This is the best aspect under which the levity of a masked ball can be considered, and to enact this with success or impunity requires an intimate knowledge of society, a perfect mastery of the current languages, and, not least, a tolerable practice in the humours of a masquerade. Even without the first qualification, however, a mask may have some chance of success, for *l'esprit d'intrigue* inherent more or less in every woman, and *l'esprit de vanité* inherent more or less in every man, contrive to give both means and subject for that saucy banter which is the groundwork of a mask's popularity.

But this, I repeat, is the best aspect of these Russian masked balls. I leave it to the astuteness of others to conclude the uses and abuses which must ensue from this temporary and utter freedom in a sex whose chief charm consists in seeking and needing protection. More especially in a country where society is placed under the utmost external restraint — where even the common courtesies of good breeding are viewed with suspicious eyes,—where a young man can hardly converse with a young

woman without laying her open to censure; and a woman is not free to indulge her love of admiration, or a man to approach her with the same, till such time as both the one and the other ought to cease, viz., till she is married. I do not exaggerate when I say that two-thirds of the masks in this Liberty Hall were married women, whose husbands knew not or cared not whether they were there.

At the same time, in a country where unfortunately neither promotion, nor justice, nor redress, generally speaking, are to be had without interest, this means of directly reaching the Imperial ear, or that of the chief officers of the state—of presenting a living anonymous letter—of dropping information which they are bound, if not to favour, at all events not to take amiss—is immensely resorted to. The Emperor has been known to remonstrate loudly at being annoyed with business or complaint in these few hours of relaxation; but this is rather to be attributed to the awkwardness or embarrassment of the poor petitioner, who, feeling the welfare of a father or brother, or of a whole family, hanging upon the force of her slender words,—addressing for the first time the awful individual whose word makes and unmakes a law,—and ashamed perhaps of the disguise to which she has been compelled, can neither command the calmness nor adroitness necessary to smooth the way for her blunter petition.

On the other hand, where the complainant, by a happy address or a well-timed flattery, has disposed the Imperial palate for the reception of more sober truths, her case has been listened to with humanity, and met by redress. More than once the Emperor was observed engaged with a mask in conversation which had evidently digressed from levity into a more serious strain, and was overheard to thank the mask for her information and promise the subject his attention.

In consequence of the taste which his Majesty has of late years evinced for this species of amusement, the masked balls have greatly increased in number and resort. Previous to being incapacitated by bad health the Empress also equally partook of them, and it is said greatly enjoyed being addressed with the same familiarity as any of her subjects. Her Majesty has even been the cause of severe terrors to many an unfortunate individual, who, new to the scene, or not recognising by filial instinct the maternal arm which pressed his, has either himself indulged in too much licence of speech, or given the Imperial mask to understand that he found hers devoid of interest.

But let us quit these scenes—at best, a masquerade is a *bad* place.

LETTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

Chief houses of reception in St. Petersburg—Freedom of the Imperial family—Restraint of the subject—Absence of etiquette—Ball at Prince Y.'s—Ball at Countess L.'s—Beauties of the high circles—Ball at Madame L.'s—General aspect of manners and morals—Dress—Servants—The Grand Duchess Helen.

After this lengthened comment upon the high Russian society as seen beneath the black cloud of a mask, it now follows to describe its usual face stripped of all disguise, save that which every individual assumes more or less on quitting his own circle. At this time all the noble and wealthy houses in Petersburg are vying with one another in the number and splendour of their entertainments—endeavouring to compress as much pleasure as possible into the few remaining weeks before Lent, when balls, theatres, and masquerades are denied them, and their only passetems reduced to soirées, concerts, and tableaux.

The principal families whose wealth enables them to maintain this rate of expenditure in this most expensive of all capitals are those of Prince Youssoupoff, Count Cheremeteff, Count Woronzoff Daschkoff, Count Strogonoff, Count Laval, Countess Razumoffski, General Sukasannet, M. Lazareff, &c., &c., whose entertainments are conducted on a scale of luxury, which, in this extreme, it is confined to a Russian capital to display. The passion for entertainment and show is inherent in a Russian breast. However husband and wife may differ on other points, they are sure to agree in a feeling which is mingled of equal parts—hospitality and vanity. Entertainments, equipages, *toilette*, — whatever appertains to show, is here found in perfection; and if you look from the window at the peasant-woman trudging past in her red and yellow, or catch sight of the gilded spire or cupola towering above the snow roofs, all tells of the same predominant disposition.

The Emperor, who, as Grand Duke Nicholas, was noted for the simplicity of his tastes, and could hardly be induced to enter a place of amusement, now resorts to them with an increasing pleasure from which some augur no auspicious result;—frequents the houses of his nobility and generals, who would spend to their last kopeck, and often go beyond it, to entertain him suitably —while the Empress's love of amusement and dress, besides inoculating her august spouse, has fixed a standard for merit, and exacted a rate of expenditure, which, to say the least, was not required to stimulate the already too-expensively disposed Russian.

For instance: a splendid *déjeûner*, which is to turn winter into summer, and Russia into Arcadia, is arranged to be given by one of the first families in St. Petersburg. One of the generals in closest attendance upon the Emperor's person is commissioned to intercede for the honour of His Majesty's presence, and obtains a gracious assent. When the day comes, however, and money is wanted, Baron Stieglitz, the great banker, shows how far the wrong page of the account-book has been encroached upon, and refuses the necessary advances. What is to be done? Money must be had.—You can't put off a monarch till a more convenient season (though we, thoughtless mortals, will put off a weightier monarch than he) —you can't "tie up your knocker, say you are sick, you are dead,"—when the Emperor and Empress of all the Russias are expected. The necessary sum—and in a country where Nature gives nothing, the expense of such an entertainment is enormous—is

therefore borrowed in haste, and at a usurious interest—for fifty per cent. is demanded and accepted on such exigencies—while all thoughts of future inconvenience are drowned in the flattering honours of the day: "*L'Empereur etait très content,*" or "*L'Impératrice a beaucoup dansé,*" is sufficient atonement.

But if you examine a little closer, and ask a few troublesome questions, it will be found that even this dearly-purchased honour is not productive of the pleasure that might be supposed. Wherever the Imperial family appear, however great their affability, however sincere and obvious their desire to please and be pleased, the mere fact of their presence throws a restraint, a *gêne*, over the whole assembly, who are depressed rather than exhilarated by the cold gaze of the Imperial eye, and who feel that the whole attention of their hosts is concentred on one object.

The young military are in apprehension lest their uniform should not be found in strict accordance, to the shape of a button or the length of a spur, with the latest regulation;—the young ladies, and equally their chaperons, are in anxiety lest any awkwardness of dress or manner should incur the censure, however pleasantly expressed, of her to whom all adjudge the purest taste in *toilette* and *tournure;* —while the host and hostess suffer real fear lest any unbecoming speech or incident should transpire to render the recollection of their hospitalities obnoxious to their illustrious guests.

The anxiety attendant on the reception of any monarch by his subject must at all times be proportioned to the honour, but here the total absence of all etiquette multiplies the difficulty an hundred-fold; for it must be remembered that the more limited the monarch, the more absolute the etiquette, and *vice versâ*. In Russia, therefore, where the Zar is "*la loi vivante*"—the constitution in person—no etiquette can exist, or rather only such as he pleases for the time being. Whatever he does is right—he cannot demean himself. His actions are restrained by no law of ceremony—by no obligation of dignity—by no fear of public opinion. His rank takes care of itself—it wants no propping—it is in one piece, like his own Alexander's column. His only restraint is his own responsibility, and in no country is this so awful. He and his consort, according to their pleasure or disposition, can either render moderation habitual, or extravagance meritorious—morality fashionable, or frivolity praiseworthy. They can qualify vices to foibles, or ennoble vanities to virtues. The example of the Crown is as imperative in private life as its will in public life, and nowhere is it more greedily imitated.

But to return to etiquette. However tedious and troublesome its formalities, they are not half so onerous to a host as his perpetual anxiety and real responsibility in a court where there is no rule for manners except the caprice of the monarch or the tact of the subject.

The truth of these remarks was exemplified at a ball at Prince Y.'s, which his Imperial Majesty honoured with his presence, and where, though he was obviously as condescending as his hosts were zealous, yet that stately figure in the portal, presiding in unbending beauty, like a being from another world, weighed down the hilarity of all present.

The hotel of Prince Y., situated upon the Moika Canal, is one of the many splendid mansions in St. Petersburg. The grand suite of apartments is adorned with a collection of pictures by the old masters, some few of which are of signal merit, especially two exquisite Claudes, a Parmegiano, and a Sasso Ferrato. In the *Salle des Antiquités* were also some valuable objects of art, particularly an antique foot; while statues by Canova and other modern sculptors, with groups in ivory and alabaster, and collections of costly china and silver ornaments, &c., were dispersed about the rooms; also two portfolios, beneath glass cases, containing original letters from Peter the Great and Catherine II. to some "*Excellence*" of this princely house.

The ball at Countess L.'s was more

spirited, for here the Heritier, accompanied by his brother-in-law, the Duke de Leuchtenberg, was the sole representative of the Imperial family, and, joining in the dance, his fine person and gentle demeanour only lent an additional grace to the scene.

Here, from the absence of restraint, I had more opportunity of noting the female beauty of St. Petersburg, among whom were foremost the Princess Belozelsky Belozersky, a lovely specimen of a "*petite Russe*," with *nez retroussé*, large languishing black eyes, hair bending from the root in the most graceful volutes, beautiful teeth, and fair skin, with a *petite taille* of the utmost delicacy;—Countess Woronzoff Daschkoff, an *espiègle* gipsy, whose *polissonnerie* of expression and speech has attracted her a species of popularity in this capital which a more regular or a more cautious beauty would not attain;—Princess Narischkin, with skin of ivory and eyes of jet;—Madame Zavadoffsky, whose plenitude of beauty the English world has seen;—the Princess Marie Bariatinsky, a fine intellectual face, with a somewhat English calm of expression, and such magnificent *chevelure* as seems to betoken strength of mind as well as of person;—Madame Stoluipin, late Princess Troubetzkoi, a graceful *nouvelle mariée*;—Mademoiselle Karamsin, the pretty maid of honour;—and last, though never least in the garden of beauty, the lovely Annette, who, with a new tiara of diamonds on her head, and a single emerald, a unique stone, large as an old-fashioned miniature or a teacup reversed, and surrounded by a single row of *solitaire* diamonds, blazing like Hermione's carbuncle on her chest, and her "*belles épaules Grecques*," as the Empress has aptly termed them, bared to view, looked, what few do, as much to advantage in the dazzling and heated ball-room as among the cool orange-groves of her own Fall.

The *toilettes* and display of jewels were beyond all description gorgeous, and the graceful, though slender, set which adorned the person of the pretty English Ambassadress were pronounced to be "*assez joli*."

This house, situated on the English Quay, is also magnificent: hall, staircase, and apartments of the utmost beauty of form and luxury of arrangement. Here was likewise a collection of pictures, fewer in number, but more select in value, than those at Prince Y.'s—a Fra Bartolomeo very conspicuous: also a small antique room with sculptures from Pompeii, and mosaic pavement from the baths of Tiberius in the isle of Capri. But hidden glories were yet behind, for our hostess, who has the repute of being "*un peu bizarre*," not thinking it worth her while to display all the resources of her mansion for the Heir of all the Russias, had refrained from lighting up her grandest reception-rooms till such time as the Emperor himself should be present. It seemed strange, in the midst of all this splendour, in which royalty mixed with so much condescension, to reflect that our hostess had a son-in-law and daughter exiled for life to Siberia for participation in the rebellion of 1826, and that she herself had not escaped either blame or punishment on that occasion, though of her present restoration to Imperial favour there can be no question.

The entertainments, however, which have been most successful this season, are the weekly balls of M. de L., the rich Armenian, whose lady, a Circassian by birth, and most decidedly so in physiognomy, presides with much grace. For these balls no regular invitations are circulated, the fashion having emanated from the court of giving the most costly fêtes in a kind of impromptu manner. Madame L. is merely understood to receive on Thursdays, and her crowding guests find all the *apprêts* of the most splendid ball. The Imperial family, if the expression may be allowed, had not been admitted to these soirées, but, in consequence of a condescending observation from his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael, "*Tout le monde parle de vos jolis bals, Madame L.: pourquoi ne m'invitez-vous pas?*" the next Thursday was distinguished by his presence.

But wherever the Grand Duke appears, he takes the strict disciplinarian

with him. Before his Imperial Highness had been in the ball-room half an hour he knit his brows with an ominous expression, and, striding up to a young officer who had just halted from the waltz, and was dreaming at that moment of no other eyes in the world but his lady's, the Grand Duke startled him with the uncomfortable words, "*Vasche Sporne schlischkom glinie*"—your spurs are too long—"*Aux arrêts:*" and sent him without further parley from his partner's arms to the guard-house. The Imperial frown and action, and the young man's discomfited retreat, were seen by many, and the incident was soon buzzed in whispers round the room, greatly to the anxiety and annoyance of host and hostess.

Such balls as these I have described, however brilliant and dazzling in relation, are not otherwise than very dull in reality; for here, as in France, society is so perversely constituted that no enjoyment is to be reaped save by infringing its rules. A "*jeune personne*"—in other words, an unmarried woman—is considered a mere cipher in society, danced with seldom, conversed with seldomer, and under these circumstances looks forward to her *mariage de convenance* as the period which, as I have said before, is to commence that which it ought to close. From the day of her marriage she is free—responsible to no one, so that she overstep not the rules of convention, for the liberty of her conduct; while her husband is rather piqued than otherwise if her personal charms fail to procure her the particular attentions of his own sex. "*Personne ne lui fait la cour*" is the most disparaging thing that can be said of a young wife. It is sad to see the difference in a short season from the retiring girl to one whose expression and manners seem to say that "Honesty coupled to beauty is to have honey sauce to sugar." Nor is it easy for an inexperienced young woman, gifted with domestic tastes, or marrying from affection, to stem the torrent of ridicule of those who would pull others down to justify themselves.

This social evil is seen in the more glaring colours from the total absence of all rational tastes or literary topics. In other countries it is lamented, and with justice, that literature and education should be made the things of fashion—how infinitely worse is it when they are condemned by the same law! In other countries all fashion, as such, is condemned as bad—how infinitely worse is it where the bad is the fashion! Here it is absolute *mauvais genre* to discuss a rational subject—mere *pédanterie* to be caught upon any topics beyond dressing, dancing, and a "*jolie tournure.*" The superficial accomplishments are so superficialized as scarcely to be considered to exist—Russia has no literature, or rather none to attract a frivolous woman;—and political subjects, with all the incidental chit-chat which the observances, anniversaries, &c., of a constitutional government bring more or less into every private family, it is needless to observe, exist not. What then remains? Sad to say, nothing, absolutely nothing, for old and young, man and woman, save the description, discussion, appreciation, or depreciation of *toilette*—varied by a little *cuisine* and the witless wit called *l'esprit du salon.* To own an indifference or an ignorance on the subject of dress, further than a conventional and feminine compliance, would be wilfully to ruin your character equally with the gentlemen as with the ladies of the society; for the former, from some inconceivable motive, will discuss a new bracelet or a new dress with as much relish as if they had hopes of wearing it, and with as great a precision of technical terms as if they had served at a *marchand de modes.* It may seem almost incredible, but here these externals so entirely occupy every thought, that the highest personage in the land, with the highest in authority under him, will meet and discuss a lady's *coiffure,* or even a lady's *corset,* with a gusto and science as incomprehensible in them, to say the least, as the emulation of coachman slang in some of our own eccentric nobility. Whether, in a state where individuals are judged by every idle word, or rather where every idle word is literally productive of mischief, the blandishments of the toilet,

from their political innocuousness, are considered safest ground for the detention of mischievous spirits, I must leave undecided; but very certain it is that in the high circles of Petersburg it would seem, from the prevailing tone of conversation, that nothing was considered more meritorious than a pretty face and figure, or more interesting than the question how to dress it.

Added to this wearying theme, it is the bad taste of the day to indulge in an indelicacy of language which some aver to proceed from the example of the court of Prussia, and which renders at times even the trumperies of toilet or jewellery rather a grateful change of subject.

Let it not be imagined, however, that no individuals with intellectual tastes or cultivated minds are to be found in these circles. On the contrary, it is an additional proof of the excellence of these gifts that, in an atmosphere where they may be said to be equally persecuted and starved, there are many who cultivate them as sedulously as they conceal them. It is not from lack of education that the frivolity of the Russian women is derived, for their tuition is generally conducted with great care by those placed as preceptresses over them; but such is the withering spell of fashion, that a young woman entering society is as anxious to hide the acquirements as any other *gaucheries* of the school-room, and it must be said generally succeeds.

Languages, which they imbibe in childhood, are the only demonstrations of acquirement permitted. English is heard on all sides, though it is little gratifying to hear our sober tongue applied to ideas by no means corresponding.

According to the statement of some elders of the society, things were very different beneath the studious reign of Catherine II., and the dignified benevolence of the late Empress mother. Now, however, the habit of frivolity is so strong that, by the rising generation especially, any deviation from the established topics is met with so real and innocent a mirth as almost to make one forgive its misapplication. How many graceful beings are there in the circles I am describing "born for better things," and whom one longs to remove from a pernicious atmosphere! By nature the Russian woman of rank is a most charming and winning creature—uniting both the witchery and the heroism of a Frenchwoman, and the seductiveness of an Asiatic, with an inherent grace and polish exclusively her own. How the same woman can drill her noble heart and high spirit down to the palling ennui of a frivolity unrelieved by the semblance of animation, and scarcely of mischief—to the mill-round of a senseless luxury, without comfort for its vindication or art for its plea—is an enigma only to be solved in the Proteus nature of human perversity. But the Russian woman ought only to be seen in other lands: there she feels herself emancipated; and there, proverbially, she is one of the sweetest types of womankind.

Speaking of dress, it must be remembered that this all paramount item in St. Petersburg is one purchased at greater expense than in any other fashionable capital. The Russian manufactories are utterly eschewed by all of any pretensions in society, and foreign goods pay an amount of duty which doubles their price. The very climate induces, nay exacts, expenses which in other countries are optional. A *demi-saison* toilette, that *entremets* on fashion's board with which many dispense, is here absolutely necessary. In short, there are endless necessary gradations between the winter's coat of mail and the summer's cobweb. Even in the livery of the servants these extremes of heat and cold induce expenses not known elsewhere.

The number of men-servants in every room is a most striking feature. Here they lounge the day long, and are ready to obey the call from the suite within, for very few houses are furnished with bells, and even in these cases the habit of calling is rather too strong to be omitted. One potent reason for the swarms of men-servants is, that a Russian establishment acknowledges not that useful member called a *housemaid*— between the lady's-maid

and the man-servant there is no intermediate link. These latter are all serfs, either the master's own, or those of another landed proprietor, to whom they frequently pay more than half their wages for the freedom of serving in this capacity. Generally speaking, however, they are a happy, good-humoured, attached race, who wait upon a lady, and especially a young and a pretty one, with a chivalrous kind of devotion. The actual and immense distance between the two classes permits of much seeming familiarity, on the same principle as the absoluteness of the monarchy extinguishes all etiquette. A young lady will call her man-servant '*brat*,' or brother; and he will speak of and to her as *Jelisavetta Ivanovna*, or Elizabeth the daughter of John. If you drive to call on a married sister, you tell the attendant, not "to the Princess ——," but "*k' Marie Alexandrovna*,"—to Marie daughter of Alexander. This custom is universal. The sons and daughters of the Imperial house are spoken of in the same manner. *Michael Pavlovitch* distinguishes the Grand Duke Michael from *Michael Nicolaievitch*, the little Grand Duke, son of the Emperor. The Empress is always designated as *Alexandra Feodorovna*, and the Grand Duchess Helen as *Helena Pavlovna*.

This last-named illustrious lady, consort of the Grand Duke Michael, and by birth a Princess of Wirtemberg, has more particularly suffered from this present condemnation of all rational tastes. Endued by nature with a most studious and reflective mind, and educated with corresponding advantages, her Imperial Highness was thrown alone, at a very early age, into a court where such qualities, far from finding encouragement, hardly met with sufferance. Not her great personal beauty nor acknowledged charm of manner could redeem the unpopular circumstance of her heterodox tastes. Of her it may be said, "*qui de son age n'a pas l'esprit, de son age a tous les malheurs*," for this inadaptation between the properties of her mind and the soil in which they were placed has exposed her Imperial Highness to trials, the peculiar painfulness of which may be better imagined than described.

From a combination of circumstances, the honour of admission to the presence of the Grand Duchess Helen was on several occasions allowed me. Owing to the delicacy of her health, as well as to her preference for retirement, she had not appeared in public during the season. My first view of this lady was therefore in her own beautiful apartments, in the *Palais Michel*. Her Imperial Highness is about two-and-thirty years of age, with a tall graceful person and great beauty of feature and complexion. Her three daughters were frequently with her. Their education, which has come under the Grand Duchess's immediate superintendence, has been conducted on a directly opposite system to that usually observed in the high circles of Petersburg, and has been successful in producing, or rather in retaining, those natural and bashful graces which are the best inheritance of youth. This was quite refreshing to witness after the artificial and premature ease,—the early and unbecoming self-possession of the children of the nobility, who, introduced from their tenderest years into the circles of society, lose much more than they gain by exchanging the charms of childhood for those of a more advanced age.

The beauties, political and picturesque, of England, and the kindness she had there experienced, seemed favourite recollections with her Imperial Highness, while the condescension of her manners, the polished intelligence of her conversation, and the inexpressible interest attached to her person and history, have excited those in me which will never subside. May the future be rich in blessings to Helena Pavlovna!

The Palais Michel is one of the grandest edifices in Petersburg;—the entrance-hall and grand staircase are celebrated for their splendour and extent. The birth of the Grand Duke Michael having taken place after the accession of the Emperor Paul, he inherited greater private property than any of his brothers.

The death of the Emperor Paul is a subject now discussed without any great reserve. Owing to his tyrannical, or, it may better be said, insane excesses, beneath which no individual in the empire could be considered safe, it was agreed upon for the public safety, and with the connivance of his eldest son, the late Alexander, to depose him from the government and imprison him for life. His immense personal strength frustrated, however, all possibility of capture, while his recognition of the assailants rendered his murder necessary. Count Pahlen was the individual who strangled him with his pocket-handkerchief, and bore ever after the sobriquet of *Schnupftuch Pahlen.* If any one to this day ask, "Who was the Countess T. by birth?" the answer, as a matter of course, is, "The only child of *Schnupftuch Pahlen.*"

It is said that Alexander never shook off the sense of indirect participation in his father's murder, by which also all punishment of the perpetrators was interdicted to him. They were merely sent out of Russia to travel.

LETTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

Prince Pierre Volkonski—Count Benkendorff—Count Nesselrode—Taglioni—The Empress—Madame Allan—The Russian theatre—The first Russian opera—Characteristics of the three classes of society in Russia—Power of the monarch—Railroad to Zarskoe Selo—The Great Palace—Reminiscences of the Emperor Alexander—The Emperor's palace—The Arsenal—General impressions.

And now, having inspected the fair ranks of beauty in this capital, it may be allowable to pass on to battalions of a hardier nature and older growth, whose martial figures and glittering apparel greatly enhance the picturesque effect of every saloon. Indeed, such is the predominance of the military, that on entering society all the male guests, at first glance, appear to be enthralled in uniform, and only on nearer inspection are the black shades of a few civilians seen gliding amongst them. In both classes—though as often as not civil and military offices of equal importance are combined beneath the same gorgeous uniform—it is highly interesting to observe individuals whose names are interwoven with the history of Russian camps or Russian politics, and whom the mind has already invested with the halo of the past. Foremost in rank in the society of Petersburg stands the Prince Pierre Volkonski, *Grand Ministre de la Cour*, distinguished outwardly by his diamond insignia of office, and by a medal of the Winter Palace, set in magnificent diamonds, presented to him on the rebuilding of this edifice, both of which hang gleaming with his other decorations on the left side of the ample breast of his uniform. This prince has the direction of all the expenditure of the Imperial family—the office of arranging all entertainments and festivities: the immediate protection of the Empress's person also devolves on him, he being her official attendant at all public places and on all occasions of travel. It is he who has the charge of the crown jewels, and the care of providing the necessary sets of jewels for the daughters of the Emperor as they attain womanhood. It was amusing to hear the good prince, who has a manly exterior and truly martial air, sigh over the expenses of the Grand Duchess Marie's late marriage — for by the Emperor's will she retains her maiden title—and calculate what would be necessary for "Olga," and what "*pour la femme de l'Héritier.*" From the check which the prudence and responsibility of Prince Pierre Volkonski sometimes place over the lavish expenditure of the court, and from his unceasing efforts to detect imposition and lessen extravagance, this nobleman, like many another in the same situation, has attracted much undeserved ill-will to his person.

Count Benkendorff is another most conspicuous character both in Russian history and in the Petersburg world. This nobleman may be cited as a rare instance of one who, while he is the intimate friend and confidant, in short, what may be termed the favourite, of the Emperor, is himself the most popular man with all classes of his subjects; and thus the connection, both official and amical, which, ever since the period of the accession, has existed between the reigning sovereign and himself, is one equally honourable to both. By the union of the happiest tact, the profoundest discretion, and the soundest integrity, Count Benkendorff has obtained an influence with his Majesty which, exerted only on the side of humanity and benevolence, is hailed with pleasure by every one. In his more especial department as head of the se-

cret police he has earned for himself a confidence and affection which certainly no *chef* in this ominous capacity ever enjoyed before, and it is matter of universal gratulation throughout the empire that this office is placed in such hands.

Count Benkendorff is brother to the late popular ambassadress to London, the Princess Lieven.

Count Nesselrode is another distinguished individual of private popularity and public celebrity, who enlivens these circles with his astute sense and playful wit.

And many other great names might be specified if space allowed.

It seems natural that individuals with whom politics necessarily occupy so large a portion of time and thought, who return direct from the senate, or from the private conference, to their domestic circles, should involuntarily continue the train of idea aloud. But such is the necessity or the habit of discretion, that not a word transpires to betray the occupation or the circle they have just quitted; save perhaps to a wife or daughter—"*L'Empereur t'a trouvée bien jolie hier au bal*," or "*t'a mise délicieuse.*"

Once, on occasion of a small dinner where Prince Volkonski, Count Benkendorff, the venerable Prince Lubetski, and other distinguished characters, were united, the conversation fell upon the organisation of the senate — the difficulty of expressing themselves in Russian, now the language of the state —the little practice which the nature of the government affords for addressing numbers;—but of the matter there discussed, *Gott behüte!* not one word.

From the national enjoyment which Russians of all classes take in every species of scenic diversion, the theatre is particularly a popular amusement. Taglioni is now the great star of attraction; and, *caressée* by the Imperial family, worshipped by the young nobles, applauded by overflowing audiences, and most munificently paid, this poetess of the ballet has every reason to be satisfied with her northern visit. But poor Taglioni has suffered deeply here; and, while she dances at night under the least possible encumbrance of gauze drapery, appears by day, her little girl in her hand, shrouded in the deepest widow's mourning—not for her husband, but for a lover, who, it seems, had proved the more constant friend of the two. At all events, there are not many in Petersburg who may throw stones;—nor, to do them justice, do they seem disposed.

Herself at the *Grand Théâtre*, Madame Allan at the *Théâtre Michel*, draw alternate crowds. Taglioni's most popular character is the *Tyen*, or *l'Ombre*, in which she has danced sixty times in succession. Here she is introduced on the stage only to die in the first act by the jealous hand of a rival, and to re-appear during the rest as a mere airy spirit, in which capacity her ethereal movements and floating sylph-like graces, for which an earthly form seems too gross, have full play. Every winged bound, or languid glide, or clean-cut pirouette, was hailed with deafening applause; the Emperor and his heir clapping their hands with all their might, and the vast parterre of military vociferating her name, which, beneath the liquid open intonation of a Russian throat, was metamorphosed to a sound which must have struck as strangely upon her ear as upon my own.

The decorative scenes of the great theatre are particularly magnificent. In the ballet of the *Tyen*, by a novel and most happy arrangement, the entire background of the stage was filled with an unbroken sheet of mirror, before which various figures moved in graceful cadence—or rather what appeared to be such—for the whole was an ocular deception brought about by an ingenious disposition of the figures, each of whom being accompanied and strictly mimicked in action by a figure of exactly similar size and costume, with a sheet of transparent gauze intervening, all the effect of reflection was produced. It occurred to few that the audience found no reflection in this apparent mirror.

It was here that the only opportunity of seeing the Empress occurred—her Majesty's state of health forbidding her

all other participation in the amusements of the season. And even here, in order to avoid the risk of exposure to the air, her Majesty arrived in her morning dress, being preceded by her waiting-women with several *cartons* which were visible in the withdrawing-room behind the Imperial box, and where her Majesty attired herself for the evening. The theatres are all heated, and sometimes to an excessive degree—the thermometer in our box standing at 82°. Her Majesty's malady appeared to be of a highly nervous nature, with an incessant restlessness of person and change of position. Her Majesty's person bore traces of symmetry, but in her present debilitated and emaciated state it was impossible to judge of her former personal attractions.

The Imperial family generally occupy a box next to the stage and contiguous to *la loge Michel:* opposite is a corresponding and similarly decorated box set apart for *le Ministre de la Cour*. The centre state-box is seldom resorted to, and was more frequently occupied by the Queen of one of the lately conquered Asiatic tribes, who resides in Petersburg upon a pension from the Crown—one whom a lively companion designated as "*la vieille fée Carabosse*," and who truly, in a fantastic Oriental costume, and attended by ladies of the same style of physiognomy, appeared to preside over a very court of ugliness.

In addition to his other numerous charges, the censorship of the theatres falls to the share of Count Benkendorff, who scrutinizes every play before its performance. Nevertheless the French theatre is not so select as to render that long habitude necessary to follow every word of a rapid French dialogue by any means desirable.

Occasionally Taglioni's ballet gave place to a very different scene, both as respects actors and audience—namely, to the performance of a Russian opera, the first ever written, called "*Jishn za Zara*," or "Your Life for your Zar:" the music by Glinki, the words by Baron Rosen. This opera, equally from the popularity of the subject and the beauty and nationality of the music, has met with the utmost success. The plot of the piece, as far as we could fathom it, was the concealment and subsequent discovery of the true Zar, and his final coronation at Moscow, with a splendid representation of the Kremlin. This is woven up with a love-tale, and rendered interesting by the fidelity of a fine old Russian with a long beard and a bass voice, who eventually pays for his adherence with his life.

The music was strikingly national, and one trio in particular appeared to combine every peculiar beauty of Russian melody and pathos, and will doubtless acquire a European celebrity. It was very strange to see true Russians personating true Russians—gallery, pit, and stage being equally filled with the same bearded and caftaned figures. The national feeling seemed in every heart and on every lip; any allusion to the Zar—and the subject was thickly strewn with them—was pronounced by the actors with the utmost animation, and responded to by electric shouts from the audience. Nor was there any casual inducement for this display of loyalty, for neither his Majesty nor any of the Imperial family were present.

These are the scenes, more than any luxurious entertainment or military parade, which reveal the strength of the Crown.

From careful observation, and the judgment of those longer experienced, it would appear that the guarantees for the continued stability of Russia lie exclusively in the person of the monarch and in the body of the people. In the nobility, whose elements of national character fall far beneath those of his serf, the monarch finds no efficient help. Foreign education and contact has, with a few brilliant exceptions, rendered them adepts in the luxury and frivolity rather than in the humanity of civilization, or grafted them with democratic Utopian ideas that in no state, and least of all in Russia, can bring forth good fruit. The Emperor, therefore, has full ground for the double mistrust with which he views money taken out of the empire and pernicious ideas brought in.

Again, in the so-called middle class—here the mere excrescence of a partial civilization, who have renounced all of their nationality save its barbarity—all real support to the Crown seems still further removed. These occupy the lower departments of the state, clogging all straightforward dealing, perverting the real intention of the laws, and intercepting every humane Imperial act by the most cunning and unprincipled dishonesty. What will be said of other and more important intentions of the Emperor when it is known that the snuff-box destined to reward some act of benevolence, which leaves the Imperial hands embossed with diamonds, reaches those of its destined owner deprived of every stone! And no redress is to be had under laws where an equal accumulation of formalities and liability to abuse meet the innocent at every turn.

Despised by the nobles, this class retaliate by a species of persecution which it is impossible to guard against. No lion's mouth, or familiars of the Inquisition, are needed in a state of things where, ere a false denunciation can be sifted and dismissed, the denounced is equally ruined in purse and worn out with constant care; and nowhere, sad to say, are denunciations of this kind so frequent as at this time in Russia—nowhere so tedious and ruinous in their exposure. Rank, consideration, long service, and high reputation are of no avail. Once an accusation is laid, however it may bear the stamp of malice, it must distil through all the corkscrew windings of the Russian law, ere the property of the accused be released from sequestration, or his mind from the most corroding anxiety—and this done, there is neither compensation for the injured nor punishment for the injurer, who has thus cloaked his cupidity or revenge under the semblance of what the people honour most, *viz.* his loyalty.

This class it is who have made the Russian courts of justice a byword and a proverb—who have called down upon Russia the unmerited sarcasm of being "*pourrie avant d'être mure*"—while, by a natural retribution, the name of *Chinovnik*, or the betitled (for these men are generally distinguished by an order), is fast becoming the synonym for low dishonesty and intrigue. The national proverb which says no Russian without "*Chai, Tschi, and Chin*"—tea, sour-krout, and a title—is perfectly true; but the sarcasm on the latter is derived from the abuse of a noble principle. Peter the Great, the well-intentioned founder of this rage for orders in Russia, was right when he foresaw the veneration with which the mass of the people would regard every individual invested with an insignia emanating direct from the sovereign, and calculated thereby on putting a wholesome power into the hands of the middle ranks: but he reckoned too soon on the formation of this class, which, to be safe or to be useful, must be gradual and spontaneous in growth; and the careless and lavish hand with which orders have been distributed since his reign has only debased the distinction without elevating the possessor.

It is predicted that, should any political convulsion occur in Russia, this miserable class, who suffer the double ill fate of ideas below their station, and a station above their maintenance, would meet with the nobility in jarring collision, and with equal danger to both, while the Crown, firmly seated in the instinctive loyalty of the people, would have nought to fear. By a providential adaptation which surpasses all speculation of legislative philosophy, the people of Russia venerate their sovereign simply because he is absolute. With them respect for the anointed sovereign is a religion; and to restrict him by human ordinances would be to strip him of his divine credentials. What Zar has yet been dethroned or murdered by an act of the people?

What a magnificent engine, thus weighted, is the power of a Russian sovereign! With the mind filled by the absoluteness of his sway, and the eye possessed by the magnificence of his person, Nicholas I. seems too grand a combination for mortal ken. But these are subjects beyond my intention. Let me now resume my outward life.

A day has been devoted to Zarskoe Selo—literally Imperial village, to

which a railroad from Petersburg offers the easiest access. It was a sharp frost with a beautiful sun, the steam pouring off against a hard bright sky. The moment of starting being delayed, we quitted the carriage to hasten to the station-house. Here was congregated together that picturesque crowd which the variety of Russian costumes always offer:—officers in grey military cloaks —women with every bright colour on their persons—priests in Rembrandt colour and costume—Mougiks with aquiline noses and long beards, and even a Russian specimen of Pickwick! We placed ourselves in the fourth carriage, commodiously fitted up with soft easy seats, and, pulling down the glass, braved the frost for a short time to contemplate the peculiarity of the landscape.

Russia is the country for railroads—no hills, no vales—no beautiful parks to intersect—no old family hearts to break. On either hand was a plain of snow, so devoid of object as hardly to indicate the swiftness of our movements. Above half-way appeared in the distance a castellated mansion, where Catherine II. was wont to relax from the Empress; and upon the horizon was the slight but only elevation of Zarskoe Selo. The distance, about twenty-five wersts, we accomplished in twenty minutes.

Alighting, we took to an open sledge, and drove to the great palace, which presents a long and dull front decorated with figures and pilasters, formerly covered with gilding, now replaced by yellow paint. This palace has, since Alexander's death, been abandoned by the Imperial family, and is therefore bare of furniture, though with great richness of walls and floors; the former either in simple white and gold, or hung with rich silks—the latter parqueted in the most graceful designs and tender colours, still at fresh as when first laid down. The two apartments of most attraction were the lapis-lazuli room, where strips of this stone are inlaid into the walls, with a few slabs and tables of the same; and the amber room, where the walls are literally panelled with this material in various architectural shapes; the arms of Frederic the Great, by whom it was presented to Catherine II., being moulded in different compartments, with the Imperial cipher, the Russian E., for Ekaterina. Two grand ball-rooms were also conspicuous, the upper end of each being occupied by a collection of the most splendid china vases placed on circular tiers up to the ceiling, and designated by the same Imperial E.

The whole palace respired recollections of Catherine II. There were her private rooms, with the small door communicating with the reigning favourite's apartments; and the gentle descent leading into the garden by which she was wheeled up and down when infirmity had deprived her of the use of her limbs.

But the sentiment of the edifice dwelt in the simple rooms of the late Emperor Alexander, whom all remember with affection, and speak of with melancholy enthusiasm. His apartments have been kept exactly as he left them when he departed for Taganrog. His writing-cabinet, a small light room with scagliola walls, seemed as if the Imperial inmate had just turned his back. There was his writing-table in confusion—his well-blotted case—the pens black with ink. Through this was his simple bedroom, where in an alcove, on a slight camp bedstead with linen coverlet, lay the fine person and troubled heart of poor Alexander. On one side was the small table with the little green morocco looking-glass—his simple English shaving apparatus—his brushes, combs —a pocket-handkerchief marked Z. 23. On a chair lay a worn military surtout, —beneath were his manly boots. There was something very painful in these relics. If preserved by fraternal affection, it seems strange that the same feeling should not shield them from stranger eyes and touch.

The palace of the Emperor Nicholas, originally built, upon the marriage of her grandson Alexander, by the Empress Catherine, excited very different feelings. It was simpler in decoration than many a noble's at Petersburg, clean as possible, and light with the rays of the bright winter's

sun. The only objects on the plain walls of the great drawing-room were a small print of Admiral Sir E. Codrington, and the busts of the seven Imperial children in infantine beauty. The Emperor's own room, in point of heavy writing-tables and bureaux, was that of a man of business, but his military tastes peeped through all. Around on the walls were arranged glass cases containing models of the different cavalry regiments, executed, man and horse, with the greatest beauty, and right, as a military attendant assured us, to a button; and this, it seems, is the one thing needful. Paintings of military manœuvres and stiff squares of soldiers were also dispersed through his apartments.

Leaving this, we proceeded to the arsenal, a recent red brick erection in English Gothic, in the form of many an old English gatehouse, and a most picturesque object in the most picturesque part of these noble gardens. Here a few weather-beaten veterans reside, who, peeping at our party through the latticed windows, opened the arched doors, and, once within, to an antiquarian eye, all was enchantment. For several successions the Russian sovereigns have amassed a collection of armour and curious antique instruments. These have been increased in the reign of his present Majesty, who erected this building purposely for their reception, and intrusted their classification and arrangement to an Englishman; and truly that gentleman has done credit to the known antiquarian tastes of his own land.

It would be impossible to enumerate the objects here preserved, consisting chiefly of ancient armour, weapons, and accoutrements of every description, for man and horse, from every warlike nation both Christian and idolater. Figures in armour guard the entrance and lead the eye along the winding staircase, whence you enter a lofty circular vaulted hall, with oak flooring, and walls hung round with carbines, lances, &c., in fanciful devices, and where, placed on high pedestals in a circle round the room, are eight equestrian figures in full accoutrements and as large as life—like our kings in the Tower. Between these you pass on to various little alcoves or oratories with groined ceiling and stained window, whose light falls on the gorgeously wrought silver cross or precious missal of some early pope—or on the diamond and pearl-woven trappings of present Turkish luxury; or on the hunting-horn, with ivory handle of exquisitely carved figures of some doughty German Markgraf of the olden time—or on the jousting instruments and other playthings of the amazons of Catherine II.'s court.

But this pleasant arsenal, the only memento in this capital of modern objects and ephemeral fashions which recalls the past, would require a volume to itself, and offers inexhaustible interest to the artist in mind, and a very treasury of beautiful subjects to the artist in profession. By command of the Emperor, a most careful and elaborate delineation of its contents, by the best artists of the day, and under the direction of M. Velten of Petersburg, is going forward;—to appear in numbers, of which at present only two have been completed, and of each only two copies printed, the one belonging to his Majesty, the other to Count Benkendorff. These are the most exquisite specimens of drawing and emblazonry, and offer an interest only second to that of the arsenal itself. But the price is high—five hundred roubles a number.

Leaving this building, we passed on through the extensive gardens of Zarskoe Selo, where a graceful distribution of grounds, though hidden with several feet of snow, and lofty groups of trees, though laden only with the sparkling white foliage of a Russian winter, give presage of the many beauties that summer will awaken. On the one hand was the tower of l'Héritier—an ornamental building in several stories, where this young prince resided with his preceptors, and studied, played, mealed, and slept in different stages. On the other hand were the baby-houses of the young Grand Duchesses, where they carried on a mimic mé-

nage. According to all accounts the childhood of the Imperial children approached nearer to the fairy times of wishing and having than would be well credited. With the bright spirit of perpetual amusement for their mother, and the formidable genius of absolute power for their father, these children seemed to mark the progress of age only by the variety and unlimitedness of their pastimes. This applies, however, more to the daughters of the house, who were the envy of all their juvenile contemporaries: with the sons the application of military discipline formed the boundary of personal indulgence.

It has been the fashion in Russia, and the impression has even crept to foreign countries, to extol the domestic life and habits of the present Imperial family. But it would appear as if the complete familiarity, both between the members of the family itself and in their manners towards others, which the absence of etiquette permits, has been mistaken for a simplicity from which it is far removed. For it is not easy to reconcile the idea of domestic tastes and habits with the entire discouragement of all rational occupations, and the ceaseless thirst for amusement. Of the Empress it is said, as of many other ladies in Petersburg —"*Elle est bonne femme, elle aime ses enfans;*" but now by some in these private circles even this "damning with faint praise" is substituted for less guarded expressions.

As for the Emperor, his high moral character has been the pride of the Russian world; and though much is now whispered to invalidate this opinion, yet by one of the lightest and prettiest women in the high circles, it was said of him, with an accent of entire sincerity, "*Il ne peut pas être léger; il vous dit tout crument qu'il vous trouve jolie, mais rien de plus.*" Nevertheless, in her Majesty's place, I should rather mistrust this passion for masked balls!

LETTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

Visit to the ateliers of Brülloff, Baron Klot, M. Jacques, M. Ladournaire—The Isaac's Church—M. le Maire—Gallery of Prince Belozelsky—Tauride Palace—Church of Smolna, and adjacent institutions—Procession of young girls in court carriages—Winter aspect of the streets—Night drives—Lent, and farewell.

After our expedition to Zarskoe Selo, another day was devoted to seeing those objects in Petersburg which are worthy every traveller's attention, and yet lie not in the traveller's regular routine. We commenced with the ateliers of the different modern artists. In this expedition Prince V. was my escort, whose taste for art is proportioned to the other fine qualities with which Nature has so lavishly gifted him. It was a beautiful day—the thermometer 6° below zero; and yet, wrapped in furs, the still, clear air was not otherwise than agreeable. We first proceeded to the Academy of Arts, on the Wassili-Ostrof, and entered Brülloff's great working-room. Here various studies and half-finished pictures engaged our attention, especially an Ascension of the Virgin, with seraphs and cherubims—a large, arched picture, destined for an altar-piece. However beautiful in form, and orthodox, artistically speaking, in composition, there was something about this picture which indicated rather the restraint than the indulgence of Brülloff's genius, which, to our view, seemed fitted for forms and expressions less celestial, for movements more rapid, and for colouring more florid. And on removing to his lodgings, in another part of the Academy, where, unfortunately, the spirit of the chamber was absent, our surmises were verified; for here, scattered about, were the freer emanations of his pencil: groups of dancing figures, with all the flow of Rubens—sultanas couched in every languid attitude—animals, elephants, and dogs—all touched with that freedom and fire which forms the chief charm of his great picture, the Fall of Pompeii. Brülloff's personal character is not good. According to my noble companion's brief sentence—"*Brülloff est comme Guido, méchant homme, mais grand artiste.*"

Thence to the atelier of Baron Klot, an Estonian nobleman and old militaire, who, as if his genius had slumbered till the evening of life should give it leisure, has, without the advantages of foreign study, produced works in sculpture surpassed by no modern artist. A bronze horse, in full action, with a lion's skin and paws hanging over, restrained by a standing figure, in equal energy and development of form, was fit to take its place by the side of Falconnet's statue of Peter the Great, and offered in every aspect the grandest outline. On the floor, in the act of gilding, lay figures of seraphs, with expanded wings, ten feet in height, destined to surround the upper dome of St. Isaac's Church, whither a few of these statues have already taken flight, looking from below scarce larger than golden eagles.

From Baron's Klot's most interesting studio we passed on to that of M. Jacques, another sculptor, now engaged on a colossal figure of Peter the Great, thirty feet high, placed on a pedestal, with a truncheon in his hand, which, when cast in bronze, is to occupy a conspicuous position at the entrance of Cronstadt harbour. We surprised M. Jacques at his work, who showed us the utmost courtesy and attention.

The room of M. Ladournaire, a painter of portraits and subject-pictures, next claimed our attention. The principal object of attraction was a large picture, painted by command of the Emperor, representing the inauguration

of the Alexander's column, on which occasion a review of a hundred thousand troops took place. On the right is the Winter Palace, treated, as the character of its architecture warrants, in the Canaletti manner. For that day, a temporary balcony from the second floor of the palace, with awnings, and a magnificent sweep of steps on either hand, was erected; where are seen the persons of the Empress and her court, and where, though reduced to figures not above an inch long, we recognised many acquaintances. On the left is seen the column in question, and between these two chief objects is the dusty review—the figures of the Emperor, with Count Benkendorff and others of his general aides-de-camp, in the foreground. Considering the disadvantage of the subject, M. Ladournaire has rendered it unusually picturesque and interesting.

Another subject of greater interest was that of the Héritier taking the oaths of allegiance to his father on attaining his twenty-first year. On this occasion the young prince showed much of that gentleness of nature which his countenance evinces; and when he came to the words "*et quand le Seigneur m'enlevera mon père,*" his emotion almost overcame him. All unite in extolling the kindness of heart and gentleness of spirit with which the Héritier of Russia is endowed.

This Academy seems in every way to carry out the intention of its foundress. The various ateliers we had visited, all spacious and appropriate, are furnished by this institution to its members, while the education and foreign study of every pupil of promise is also given gratuitously.

We now retraced our steps over the Isaac's bridge, and entered the circle of temporary buildings with which the great Isaac's Church, which the Russians already designate as the *Sabor*, or cathedral, is surrounded. Never was pure Corinthian seen beneath so piercing a climate; and yet the clearness and transparency of the atmosphere were such that, to the organ of vision alone, it might have been mistaken for the heated and glowing sky of Greece. This building is in the form of an equal cross, with four grand entrances, approached by a flight of granite steps, each whole flight in one entire piece; but, after the Alexander's column, this is nothing for Petersburg. We entered the transept fronting the Neva, which is also the most advanced towards completion. This alone is a building of enormous magnitude, on too large a scale for us human pigmies, unless we except this magnificent Emperor. The vastness of the whole edifice, when completed, may therefore be conjectured. The original design of the cathedral at Cologne is not nearly so gigantic. The embellishments of the façade and windows are intrusted to other sculptors, who share with those we have mentioned in this grand task. The atelier of M. le Maire, a French sculptor engaged for this purpose, was close by; the department assigned to him is the group of figures on the pediment of one of the façades—the subject, the Angel at the Tomb, with the Magdalen and other female figures on the one side, and the terrified soldiers, in every attitude of consternation, on the other: the figures eight feet in height. These are all to be in bronze, gilt over, though, to increase the relief of the figures, M. le Maire intends suggesting to the Imperial sanction whether it would not be expedient to leave the back-ground of the pediment the colour of the metal.

Having thus taken an aggregate of the artists whom Russia has sent forth from her own academy, or summoned from others, we bent our course along the length of the Nevsky to the residence of Prince Belozelsky. This nobleman possesses a fine gallery of paintings, collected by his father, a connoisseur of established fame, during a long residence in Italy. A splendid Guido, Mercury and Flora strewing the distant earth with roses, and drawn with cords by fluttering Cupids, is the *chef-d'œuvre* of the collection. A small sketch by Raphael of the Murder of the Innocents appeared to me to possess all the beauties of that master. Two Gaspar Poussins, two Breughels of unusual size, were among the most

remarkable. But the gallery is in great disorder, and, being unheated, the pictures are suffering from the inclemency of the atmosphere. Princess Belozelsky, whose beauty I have before alluded to, is now sitting to Mrs. Robinson, our English artist, who is earning golden opinions in the high circles for the beauty and grace of her portraits. This lady is also engaged upon a full-length of the Empress.

Hence we proceeded to the Tauride Palace, presented by Potemkin to Catherine II., the latest sovereign on European record who has accepted such a gift from a favourite. This building is now dedicated to the residence of a few superannuated ladies of the court. The entrance saloon is occupied by a collection of antique marbles; and in the centre stands a temple, in form like the temple of Vesta, with malachite pillars and inlaid jasper floor, capable of containing about six persons, and destined, not as the seat (for in Russian houses of worship none sit), but as the standing-place of honour of the Emperor—to be included within that most worthy outer temple the Isaac's Church: this is the gift of M. Demidoff. Through the Salle des Antiques we passed to the grand ball-room,—where Potemkin gave a fête to the Empress, and where the musicians were suspended in the chandeliers,—which terminates in a vast semicircle, filled with orange and pomegranate trees, interspersed with marble statues.

The church of Smolna now claimed our attention—a magnificent pile in white marble, with *les institutions pour les filles nobles* on either hand, each with chapel adjoining, on the same scale as the church, and connected with a gorgeous iron railing. We entered,—and the peculiarity of the scene arrested our steps—for no object met our view save walls and columns of polished, dazzling white marble. Passing on, the three altars appeared, or rather the massive screens, of bronze-gilt vine-leaves, grapes, and ears of corn intertwined, which concealed them. The altar-steps and pavement were of porphyry, the altar-railings crystal.

A velvet canopy on the one hand betokens the Emperor's place, and on the other a marble tablet records the benevolent life of the late Empress-mother, who founded the adjoining institutions. But these were the only objects which broke the grand monotony of white marble. The choristers sing from the heights of the pillars, the narrow overhanging ledge being protected by invisible railings. The church was of a most agreeable temperature (or rather where is the Russian edifice that is not?)—this is maintained by twenty-four stoves, heated without intermission.

Emerging, we encountered thirty of the court carriages, in grand trappings, proceeding at a foot-pace, and bearing the young ladies of the adjoining convents, who on this only day of the year parade slowly through the streets, and are allowed to have such a peep of the world as may be had through the clouded glasses of a coach, and in the presence of a superior. Four of these young creatures were in each coach, attended by an elder.

And now by this time we were almost as sick of sight-seeing as, doubtless, you are; and with sharpened appetites, cloaks laden with icicles, and cheeks tinged with the brightest crimson, we returned to the luxurious mansions of the great in Petersburg.

However we may impugn the severity and implacability of a Russian frost, yet there is something inexpressibly exhilarating in this continuance of serene, sunny weather, which sheds a hazy brightness over the picturesque street and canal scenery of this capital, and decks the distant snow perspective in alternate stripes of yellow lights and lilac shadows. As many sledges are now seen gliding upon the canals as in the streets—as many passing under as crossing over the numerous bridges. A constant warfare, however, is going forward with the ice; for bands of peasants are hewing and extracting great blocks—destined for the summer's ice-houses, or intended to alleviate the violence of the thaw's inundation,—and thence are seen filing through the streets on rough sledges, composedly

leaning or sitting on their cold, transparent loads.

There is a peculiar pleasure in passing from one quarter of this vast capital to another by night, in an open sledge, with one fiery horse and a trusty coachman, crossing from the islands the gloomy Neva, which is lighted by lamps, just directing your track; with the huge outline, spiked with scaffolding, of the Isaac's Church rising dull against the sky, and the Winter Palace before you streaked with brightly lighted arched windows, framed in yellow or crimson draperies. Thence through the streets, less lighted by their oil-lamps than by the illuminated palaces of the nobility; while here and there a crush of carriages, and bright flaring tongues of flames from vessels of oil placed on the pavement, betoken a gala within. And so onwards through the Champ de Mars; on the one hand, the flickering, shooting coruscations of an aurora, bright as the rising sun, the almost nightly phenomenon of this latitude—and, on the other, the glare of a fire in the suburbs, which, from the number of old wooden houses still left, and the proverbial Russian carelessness, is almost as frequent an occurrence. And now the horse rushes swiftly forward, disturbing thoughts which have wandered, they know not how, from these fires of heaven and earth to homes in England, and that scarce less than home in Estonia; and the air meets your face with the sharpness of an instrument, while, regardless of the deep furrows of the long-worn ice, the generous animal continues his speed till the little sledge mounts and descends like a bark on a bounding wave; and you are fain to hook one finger into the coachman's broad silken belt to keep your equilibrium.

At all fires of any importance, the Emperor, who appears to perform the real labour of any three men in his own person, and to possess a frame and a will of the same metal, is a constant attendant. Also here, as at the masked balls, some of his principal officers are summoned as a part of their service; sometimes with such trial, from fatigue and exposure to cold, to their physical powers, as to induce the unloyal wish that his Majesty's were a little less vigorous.

But it seems a prevailing principle with the Crown to interpose its presence, or an earnest of its presence, in every circumstance of life, whether usual or accidental,—to prove to its subjects the indispensability of its help—to maintain literally the relation of parent and child—and by retaining its hold over every department, and making that a favour which we should consider a right, to facilitate the immediate exertion of its power. With the army this is conspicuously the case. The officer whose strict pay is so paltry that it is far from defraying the expenses of his wife's wardrobe, receives in addition what is called *Tafel-geld*, or table-money: for, like the soldiers, he is supposed to be boarded at the Emperor's expense, and besides this may expect an annual present, either from his Majesty or the Grand Duke Michael, equal about in amount to his pay. Lodging and furniture are also provided him. The higher officers connected with the state, especially, occupy magnificent residences belonging to the Crown, and furnished with proportionate splendour. Such is the extent of Count ———'s superb hotel, one of the Crown residences just mentioned, that a subaltern constantly resides in the house in order to superintend the necessary repairs. If a chimney smokes, or a window is broken, or a nail requires to be placed, this crown servant is summoned.

But these subjects, trivial as they may appear, are connected with the very well-springs of Russian policy, and therefore not within the vocation of these letters. Meanwhile, the Carnival, or what is here termed the *Maslenitza*—literally the *Butterwoche*, or Butter-week—when the fatiguing round of amusement is redoubled — when masked balls are more frequent and more full—when the theatres are open both morning and evening—when the grand *Place* before the Winter Palace is occupied by the *Montagnes Russes*, and by the *Katcheli*, or Russian merry-go-rounds—and when the streets throng

with that unusual feature in Petersburg, a crowd of pedestrians — this happy time for so many is come and gone; and in its place, Lent, with its church-going and fasting—when concerts and tableaux constitute the sole entertainments—when the German theatre alone is open—when meat and butter, eggs and milk, are all forbidden, and your tea and coffee are only mollified by the extract of almonds — when all the outward apparel of a feast goes forward, but your dishes are only an ingenious variation of fish and oil, flour and water: or if a more nutritious ingredient, or more savoury taste, find its way in, it is at the expense of the cook's conscience and not your own;—Lent, when those who before had feasted, or before had starved, all now equally fast, and from which only the foreigner or the invalid is exempt, has now commenced its seven weeks' reign.

And with the vanished gaieties of this gayest and dullest of all capitals the sober writer of these letters must also pass away—to retain a sincere admiration for the intrinsic elements of Russia—the deepest interest in its welfare—the highest faith in its destiny;—but also the reluctant conviction that, at this present time, Russia is the country where the learned man wastes his time, the patriot breaks his heart, and the rogue prospers.

THE END.

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